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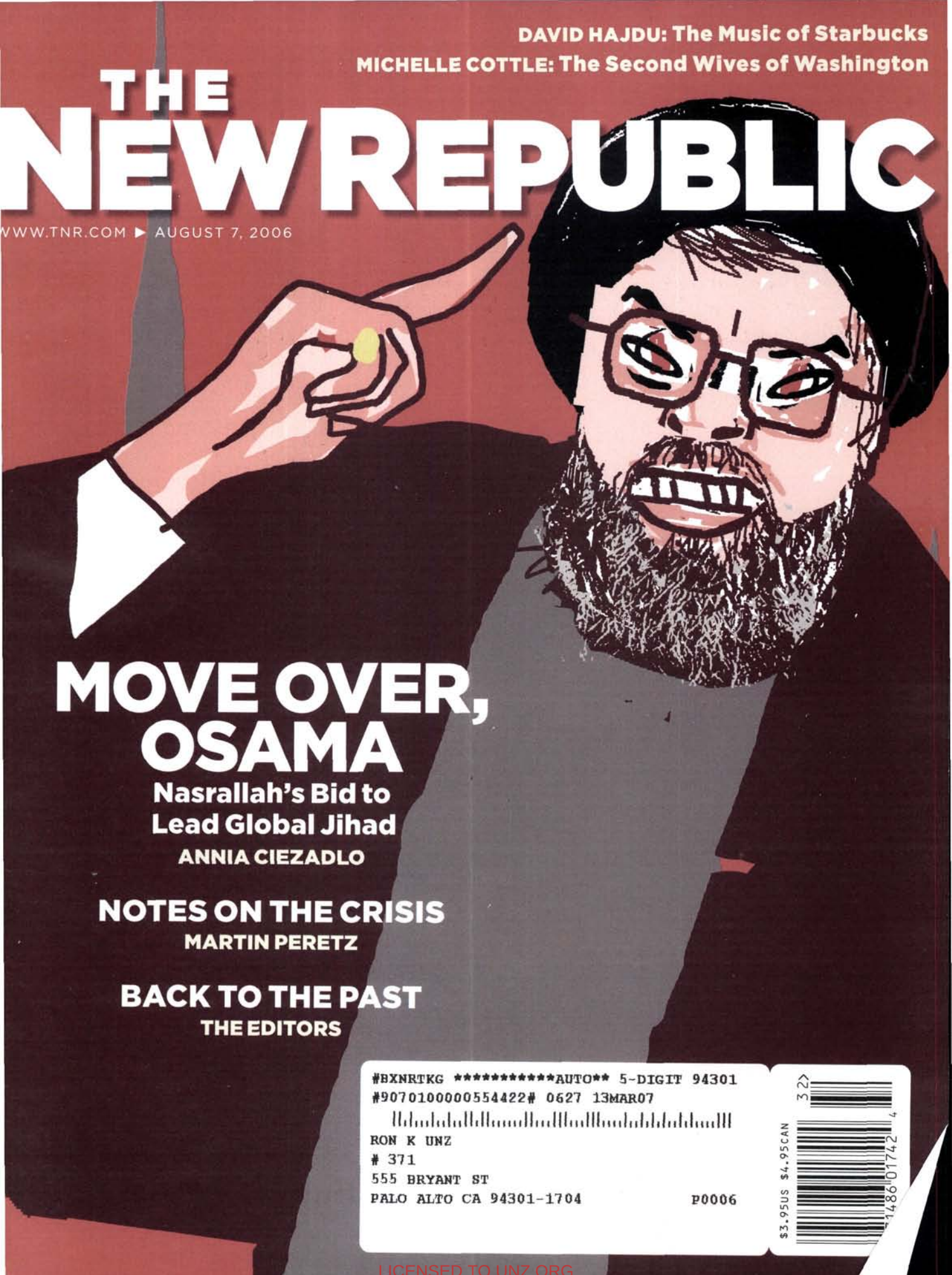

MOVE OVER, OSAMA

Nasrallah's Bid to Lead Global Jihad

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NOTES ON THE CRISIS

MARTIN PERETZ

BACK TO THE PAST

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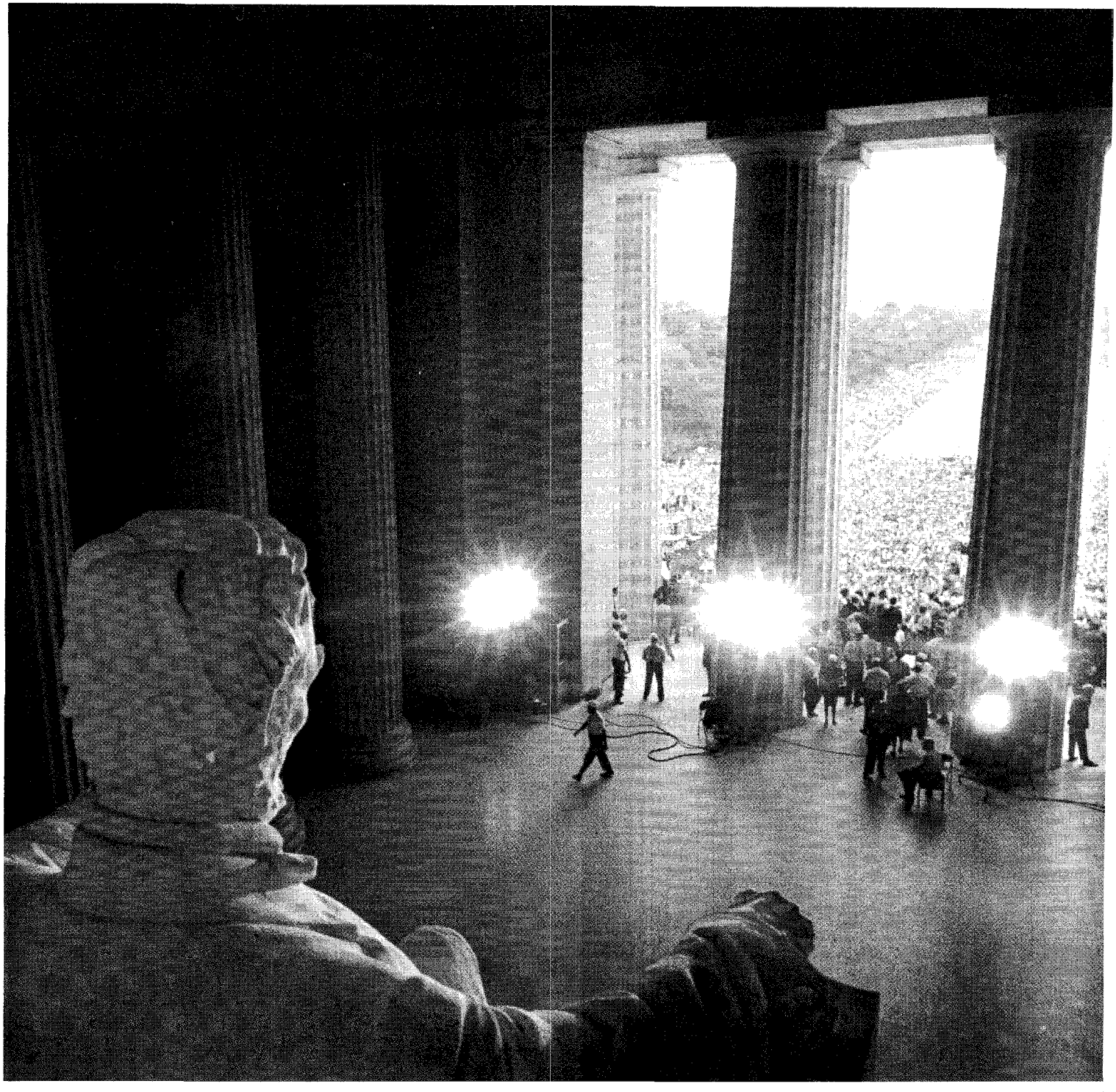

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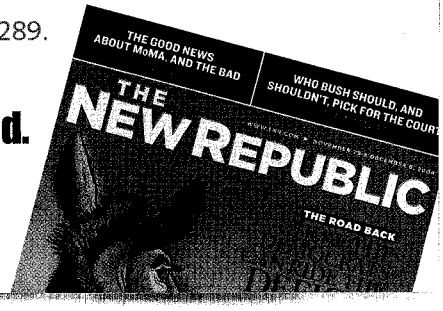

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AUGUST 7, 2006 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUE 4,777 VOLUME 235

COVER STORY

Annia Ciezadlo **12** **Beirut Dispatch: Sheik Up**
Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah's bid to lead global jihad.

Martin Peretz **14** **Just Cause** Notes on the crisis.

POLITICS & THE WORLD

4 **CORRESPONDENCE**
Did persecution select for Jewish intelligence? &c.

Peter Beinart **6** **TRB | Party Pooped** If you're enjoying the Republican bloodletting, just wait. There's a lot more to come.

The Editors **7** **Back to the Past** Forget about peace. Think of deterrence.

Jonathan Chait **8** **Thomas Pain** A hack journalist's strange rise to liberal icon.

Thomas B. Edsall **10** **The Grudge** Howard Dean v. Hillary Clinton.

Michelle Cottle **16** **Second Wives Club** Recently divorced congressman seeks new mate. Must enjoy long walks on K Street, travel to distant home district, and romantic candlelit dinners with well-heeled contributors.

Lee Siegel **34** **NEW YORK DIARIST | Il.Duce.blogspot.com**

BOOKS & THE ARTS

Stanley Kauffmann **20** **FILMS | Fearfully Free**
Mamet's *Edmond* explores a man's desperation to change his life.

David Hajdu **21** **MUSIC | The Music of Starbucks** The Starbucks empire, which now includes a rapidly expanding entertainment division, has grown well beyond beverages. But, as with its coffee, the company is interested less in satisfying the musical tastes of its customers than in instilling them. A review of Starbucks's CDs.

Steven Hahn **23** **The Other American Revolution** *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* by Eric Foner

Larry Bradley **26** **POEM** | *The Geese*

Adam Kirsch **29** **The Myth of Me** *Averno* by Louise Glück

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY *Miguel Santamarina*

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CORRESPONDENCE

BLOG FLOG

RYAN LIZZA'S DISPATCH FROM Yearly Kos was revealing in one major regard: the apparent illusion that the so-called "liberal blogosphere" holds clout among the Democratic Party ("Wag the Blog," June 26). Former Governor Mark Warner's statement—"This is the new face of democracy and the new face of the Democratic Party"—is at best pandering and at worst ignorance. A bunch of middle-aged white guys ranting from a pessimistic, ultra-leftist perspective is not the "new face." Let's look at two prominent races that were apparently influenced by the liberal blogosphere. First, there was the recent Montana Democratic primary for U.S. Senate. Jon Tester's win was not a victory for the liberal blogs, as they like to claim. Tester, unlike his opponent, was not having an extramarital affair. Democratic voters knew that, to go against the scandal-tainted Senator Conrad Burns in the general election, they would need to pick a squeaky-clean candidate. Second, there was the last true candidate of the liberal blogosphere, Howard Dean. Before any of the 2004 presidential primaries, Dean had all the hype, the front-runner status, and his face on the covers of both *Time* and *Newsweek*. But, when the Iowa caucuses rolled around, he was soundly whipped by two Democratic Leadership Council New Democrats, John Kerry and John Edwards. Their optimism and focus on the middle class trumped Dean's anger and exclusivity. Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack said it best with regard to the liberal bloggers: "There is some maturing that has to take place."

JEREMIAH A. BREWER
Centennial, Wyoming

TANGLED TUBES

THE EDITORIAL ON NET NEUTRALITY ignores the fact that the next generation of Internet will offer unedited and uninterrupted access at whatever speed the consumer pays for ("Open Net," June 26). Not to worry: *Daily Kos*, as well as Google and Amazon, will be fully and freely available. Indeed, the coming upgrades to the pipes that reach consumers will make the Internet experience faster and better. And, if there is any interference by a misguided broadband provider, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has enforcement authority right now. Yes, there likely will be specialized services using the Internet for delivery, like HDTV on demand and medical and eldercare monitoring. The business arrangements for providing those services will help pay for upgrades and buildout. A law banning those additional services, in the name of "neutrality," means that consumers will pay the entire cost of any upgrade and will be deprived of new and innovative services. Now is not the time to change the "hands off" approach to Internet regulation that started with the Clinton administration, especially when the rationale for heavy governmental regulation is based on fears, not facts.

MIKE MCCURRY
CHRISTOPHER WOLF
Co-Chairs
Hands Off the Internet
Arlington, Virginia

IT IS PROVOCATIVE TO ASSERT THAT the Bush administration put its thumb on the scale in forcing the FCC to eliminate common carrier regulations for telephone companies offering Internet services. Ironically, however, that decision had no overt partisan taint. The FCC acted in a principled way by following the rule of law—namely, a then-recent Supreme Court decision that found the FCC had no legal authority to impose net neutrality on broadband Internet services offered by cable TV operators. In eliminating these regulations, the FCC reflected the legal mandate of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to promote vigorous competition between cable and telephone companies. That law was enacted with broad bipartisan support and enthusiastic backing by President Clinton. So the reality here wasn't the result of a fiat by "George W. Bush's Federal Communications Commission." Instead, two Republican and two Democratic FCC commissioners forged an unusual, unanimous consensus that is a textbook case of reasoned policy-making, not raw political power. The "neutrality" debate is now properly back in Congress, which has the power to amend the Communications Act to overturn the Supreme Court's decision. That debate should take place on the merits, rather than as a measure of displeasure with the FCC. The FCC is frequently the object of criticism, even scorn, but the facts here show that the Commission performed consistent with its legal obligations rather than as a captive of the White House.

STUART N. BROTMAN
Lexington, Massachusetts

continued on page 32

STEVEN PINKER ON JEWISH GENES | MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM ON MANLINESS
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Blah, Blah, Blogs
RYAN LIZZA, CHRISTINE ROSEN

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Party Pooped

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

CONSIDER THESE FOUR NEWS stories, all of which ran within the last month. On July 6, *The Washington Post* reported that House and Senate Republicans had taken their intramural immigration fight to the country, holding rival hearings that illustrated "starkly different viewpoints on what has become one of the most intractable and divisive issues to confront the GOP in years." Four days later, *The New York Times* reported that the Supreme Court's Guantánamo Bay decision had "set off sharp differences among Republicans in Congress over what kinds of rights detainees should be granted." On July 18, George Will—America's preeminent conservative columnist—slammed America's leading neoconservative, William Kristol, for rashly proposing military action against Iran. And, the day after that, the *Times* reported on President Bush's veto of an embryonic stem-cell bill backed by Republican Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and 2008 front-runner John McCain. And people say Democrats are divided.

In fact, Democrats *are* divided—just not as deeply as the GOP. In our political system, opposition parties are rarely unified. If the United States had a parliamentary system like Great Britain's, Democrats would have a shadow prime minister, empowered to speak for the party. Under our system, by contrast, Democrats have leaders in the House and Senate, a party chairman, and a gaggle of presidential hopefuls, none of whom relies on the others for his or her job. In June, Democratic bigwigs pleaded with John Kerry not to propose a fixed timetable for withdrawal from Iraq and thus split the party. He did it anyway—since a party split over Iraq might serve his interests in 2008.

But the split over Iraq, while incredibly bitter now, will eventually fade as the United States withdraws from that tormented country. And, beyond Iraq, Democrats are more ideologically united than they have been in four decades. The struggle that initially roiled the Clinton administration—between deficit hawks and deficit spenders—is basically over; today, even the most liberal Democrats are fiscal conservatives. Racially saturated issues like welfare and crime, which split white and black Democrats in the 1970s and 1980s, have receded. Even on trade, perhaps the party's most enduring cleavage, most Democrats can unite behind trade deals that include serious labor and environmental standards.

This underlying unity is obscured by the war of words between the party's Clinton-dominated Washington establishment and its insurgent, Deaniac activists. But that fight is about rhetorical style, political strategy, and, above all, power. Blogger-activist Markos Moulitsas has urged Democrats to reject Bill Clinton's legacy, but, in his recent manifesto, *Crashing the Gate*, he challenges none of Clinton's once-controversial policy innovations. In fact, the ideological gulf between bloggers like Moulitsas and the Democratic Leadership Council is trivial compared with the gulf between the DLC and Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition two decades ago. A savvy Democratic standard-bearer will find it relatively easy to unite Democrats in 2008, because the party's various constituencies are divided more over who gets a seat at the table than over what they say once there.

The Republicans aren't so lucky. In 2000, McCain attacked the GOP's core economic idea (that tax-cutting trumps balancing the budget) and its core political constituency (the Christian Right)—and he almost won the Republican nomination. Then September 11 hit, and all was forgiven as Republicans closed ranks behind Bush's war on terrorism. But today, with the Middle East in flames and many Republicans souring on Iraq, national security is no longer an effective partisan adhesive. As the Will–Kristol showdown suggests, the next great foreign policy struggle—over Iran—may well divide Republicans more than Democrats. Even on civil liberties questions like Guantánamo Bay, where the GOP once marched in lockstep, congressional Republicans are today at one another's throats.

And, with the war on terrorism no longer binding Republicans together, other fissures are becoming impossible to conceal. On embryonic stem-cell research, polling shows Democrats overwhelmingly supportive but Republicans roughly split. And that split made its way to the Senate last week, where Frist and McCain broke with Bush on the issue—virtually guaranteeing that it will divide the GOP presidential contenders in 2008.

Beyond stem cells, the GOP has a looming abortion problem. The more elections Republicans win, and the more judges they appoint, the closer they will get to overturning *Roe* v. *Wade*. But the closer they get, the more divided they will become. As long as abortion rights seem secure, socially moderate country club Republicans are content to humor the Christian Right while enjoying the tax cuts that they receive in return. The day *Roe*'s repeal seems imminent, however, the humoring will end and the brawling will begin.

On immigration, the brawling has already begun. Viscerally, grassroots Republicans are nationalists. When that nationalism centers on foreign policy, as it did after September 11, the party's business-oriented elite can rest easy. But, when it spills into economics, the problems begin. As Iraq has gone sour, conservative activists have shifted their nationalist passion from terrorism to immigration. And that has placed them in direct conflict with both the Republican-affiliated corporations who rely on cheap immigrant labor and a White House that fears alienating Latino voters. On immigration, according to a recent CBS poll, only 52 percent of Republicans approve of Bush's policies. And if McCain—who is even more pro-immigration than Bush—wins the GOP nomination, a lot of conservative activists may start heading for the exits.

The GOP's position today is perilously similar to its position when George W. Bush's father was president. Under Ronald Reagan, the cold war held Republicans together. But, when it ended, the party split along class lines. In 1992, many blue-collar Republicans flocked to Ross Perot, who ran against NAFTA and the "giant sucking sound" that would hand American jobs to Mexicans. Today, on immigration, many blue-collar Republicans hear that sucking sound again. And, if I were a GOP operative, I would find it the most frightening sound in the world.

PETER BEINART

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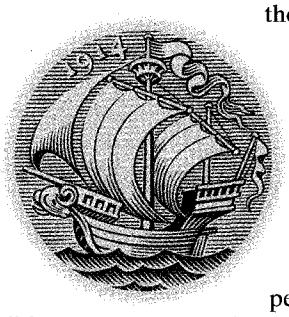
Back to the Past

IT IS PARADIGM time in the Middle East. Israel's war with Hezbollah is sobering for many reasons, but the most sobering reason of all is that this conflict seems to have come out of the past, and to signify a return of the conflict to an old model, a bleaker norm. For decades now, probably since Anwar Sadat's unbelievable journey to Jerusalem, we have become accustomed to thinking about the conflict around Israel's borders in terms of solutions. The solutions proposed were many, and the disputations about them were fierce; but almost everybody agreed that transformation was possible and peace a plausible prospect. But the war across Israel's northern frontier is not about peace. It is about deterrence.

That is to say, it represents the restoration of the terrible old predicament, in which the best that could be imagined was not the solution of the conflict but the management of the conflict. Israel can cripple Hezbollah, but it cannot destroy it, since Hezbollah is a movement with a social and philosophical foundation in its country; and Hezbollah will certainly never renounce its power or its philosophy, since it regards both as holy; and the Lebanese state is too riven and feeble to assert control over all of its territory; and there are regional powers whose interests are well-served by a strong Hezbollah and a weak Lebanon—and so the most that we can hope for is an absence of war maintained by a balance of power. Or, more precisely, by an imbalance of power that will dissuade Allah's cadres in southern Lebanon from any more provocations. These are not the circumstances of a peace process.

The unexpected difficulties of the Israeli ground operations in southern Lebanon—the discovery of the scope and sophistication of Hezbollah's military capabilities—only reinforces this dour conclusion. All those tunnels and all those rockets were quite plainly preparations for an eventual—and, since it would be hallowed by ideology, inevitable—war. The Syrians and the Iranians did their work in southern Lebanon very well. They placed formidable force in the hands of would-be martyrs eager to use it. Strategically speaking, victory for Israel in this war means only the greatest possible destruction of this force before diplomacy really kicks in. Nothing less, but nothing more. In sum: a new era of deterrence.

This new era of deterrence comes with some new twists and obstacles. The range of the missiles in Hezbollah's arsenal is an unprecedented threat: Israel's enemies can now reach very far into the Jewish homeland. The border is no longer the flashpoint. And it is not clear how traditional deterrence will work against people who regard death and defeat as vindication and beatification. Deterrence, after all, is premised on a considerable degree of rationality, and there is nothing rational about religious warfare. Hassan Nasrallah and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (and the Hamas leadership) are certainly capable of clear and clever thinking, and they can calculate their interests as coldly as any rational being—but there is no value, no belief, that inhibits them in their desire to see Israel in ruins. Whether or not they are tactically reasonable, they are strategically unreasonable. It is not reasonable to seek the extirpation of another state.



It is a measure of the illegitimacy of Hezbollah's aggression against Israel that its leaders and its supporters have sought to portray it as a crusade against colonialists and occupiers. It is nothing of the sort. There was no Israeli presence in any part of Lebanon when Hezbollah started this crisis. Israel has no historical interest in Lebanon except a strong and truly sovereign Lebanese state. Nor do the leaders of Hezbollah have any moral or historical claim upon any parcel of Palestine. They are not Palestinians. They are just religious fascists with genocidal fantasies. And their view that the Jewish state is an abomination has nothing to do with its policies, but with its existence. And so the conflict with Hezbollah has none of the complexities and the torments of the conflict with the Palestinians.

Soon, the diplomats will bring an end to the hostilities. What remains to be seen is whether they can also end the conditions that created the hostilities. Will Hezbollah be disarmed? Will Syria be persuaded to desist from its regional intrigue? Will the West finally get ruthlessly serious about Iran? (No, bombing is not the only instrument of policy we have.) And meanwhile Israel will be back in the old grim business of credible deterrence—not as glamorous a cause as peace, but no less urgent, since security is also a first principle of morality. ■

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A hack rises.

Thomas Pain

BY JONATHAN CHAIT

LAST APRIL, WHEN comedian Stephen Colbert appeared before the White House Correspondents' Association dinner and memorably lacerated the assembled reporters for having spent much of the last five years as lazy courtiers for the Bush administration, he exempted one person from his barbs: Helen Thomas, the 85-year-old columnist for Hearst Newspapers. Indeed, Colbert's performance ended with a videotaped segment portraying him as the White House press secretary, relentlessly pursued by a dogged Thomas, who drove him into a panic with her insistent demands that he explain why the country went to war with Iraq. What had begun as an indictment of press capitulation ended as a tribute to the will and integrity of journalism's grand old dame. As the video ended, Colbert extended his arm toward its heroine, who was sitting at the head table near President Bush, and declared, to thunderous applause, "*Helen Thomas*, ladies and gentlemen."

Once the epitome of a wire-service stenographer, Thomas has, over the past several years, emerged as the liberal journalistic icon of the Bush era. Her fame derives in part from customs that have arisen thanks to her longevity: For press briefings, she has a permanent seat in the front row and is alone in having her own name engraved on it. (Her colleagues' chairs all bear the names of their respective news outlets.) For years, she has, as a courtesy, been allowed to ask the first question. Of late, she has added to her image as doyenne of a bygone age by asking exceptionally combative questions of Bush and his interlocutors. "My point," she asked with typical bluntness in the run-up to the Iraq war, "is, why is the president going through this charade of diplomacy when he obviously plans to go to war?"

This unique combination of staying power and anti-Bush obstreperousness has made Thomas a hero to the left. Her advanced age, diminutive proportions, gnarled features, and scraggly voice suggest a Yoda-like mien, adding to her aura of wisdom and integrity. "Aged, frumpy, a bit grumpy, Thomas is a throwback in this telegenic age, an unglamorous reminder of a more civic era," wrote James Wolcott in *Vanity Fair*. Novelist Dermot McEvoy seconded the "throwback" idea, declaring her "a throwback to the time when Edward R. Murrow, I.F. Stone, and Jack Anderson were feared as purveyors of truth by the powers that be." It's a mantle Thomas has been more than happy to wear. In her new book, *Watchdogs of Democracy? The Waning Washington Press Corps and How It Has Failed the Public*, she casts herself as the sole voice of skepticism among her supine colleagues in the press corps.

THE HELEN THOMAS of the liberal imagination is, alas, a largely mythical creation—and a convenient one for the administration she supposedly terrorizes. To begin with, she is a bizarre choice for heir to the liberal muckraking tradition. McEvoy's encomium notwithstanding, Thomas bears little resemblance to journalistic crusaders like Murrow, Stone, and Anderson. None of them were members of the White House press corps—which makes sense, given that it is not a natural launching pad for muckrakers. Despite its superficial glamour, the beat holds limited interest for most reporters. Lucky White House correspondents can—or, at least, used to be able to—pal around with the president and his top aides and circulate among the capital's social elite. But the job consists largely of writing down whatever the White House has to say on a given subject, with limited opportunities for original reporting or fresh writing. White House reporters often joke that their trips accompanying the president amount to a "body watch"—i.e., their primary role is to be present in the unlikely event that the chief executive suddenly drops dead. Due to the limited nature of the job, leading newspapers tend to cycle reporters—especially valued ones—off the beat after just a few years.

Thomas made her name, in other words, simply by staying in the same gruntwork job far longer than any of her colleagues could bear. She started on the beat in 1960; stories describing her as the dean of the White House press corps can be found as early as 1979. At some point, through sheer force of longevity, she became etched into the Washington landscape. If you made a movie about the White House, you needed a Helen Thomas cameo. (She played herself in *Dave* and *The American President*, and also in a humorous sketch made by President Clinton's staff for the 2000 White House Correspondents' Association dinner.) In recent years, she has begun collecting awards at a breathtaking pace: More than 30 honorary degrees, the Helen Thomas Lifetime Achievement Award from the White House Correspondents' Association, the International Women's Media Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award, the National Press Foundation Kiplinger Distinguished Contributions to Journalism Award, and the *Glamour* Woman of the Year Award, among many others.

The odd thing about her awards and citations is that they almost never mention any specific contributions she has made to journalism save for being female and, well, old. The usual path to journalistic fame, other than appearing regularly on television, is to break a major story—Ida Tarbell and Standard Oil, Bob Woodward and Watergate, et cetera. But Thomas has no connection to any such body of work. She has never had a big scoop or been a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize. Indeed, of the many people who recognize Helen Thomas, it's unlikely that one in 100 can recall a single article she has ever written. She was simply *there*, a fact

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made evident in her previous books, *Front Row at the White House*; *Thanks for the Memories, Mr. President*; and *Dateline: White House*, all of which reflect little more than an insider's nostalgic congeniality.

Thomas's new book delicately attempts to reconcile her old role as Washington institution and her current role as crusading outsider. Her basic argument is that the young whippersnappers in the press corps don't ask tough questions the way the old-timers used to. "I believe the journalists of the past," she writes, "were more dedicated to the profession than those now." The new generation lacks "historical perspective on government deception and folly."

Uncomfortably for her thesis, she spends much of the book reminiscing fondly about the old days when presidents slapped backs and threw down drinks with the ink-stained wretches covering them. Thomas presents the Kennedy years—during which, she writes, "The atmosphere [between Kennedy and the press] was chummy"—as a golden age of journalism.

The more Thomas reveals about how things worked in her salad days, the worse her argument looks. She recounts how, at one point, she wrote a sympathetic story about Lyndon Johnson's regular visits with his aged cousin. Johnson's press secretary, naturally, was delighted—seeing the piece as a paean to the president's "rough, but somehow tender, sensitivity to the loneliness of an elderly widow" and predicting it would win him millions of votes. Alas, LBJ took inexplicable offense. So, recalls Thomas, "He stopped 'wining and dining' me. He no longer invited me to the ranch, and he no longer considered me the friend he once did." All this in retaliation for her attempt to write a puff piece! Explain to us again how journalists were tougher back then?

IT IS TRUE that Thomas has always been known as an aggressive questioner of presidents and their flacks—especially Republican presidents, who especially offend her (obviously liberal) sensibilities. But a turning point in her role took place in 2000, when she quit her beat at United Press International and started a column with Hearst Newspapers. Liberated from the constraints of objectivity, her tough questions increasingly devolved into unhinged rants.

Her emergence as a liberal icon can be dated to the night of March 6, 2003, when President Bush committed the crime of failing to call on her at a press conference. Washington gasped at the shocking snub. It was "the first time anyone can remember her being stiffed," wrote *Washington Post* media reporter Howard Kurtz. Liberals rose up in outrage, the hack now a martyr at the hands of Bush. "President Bush broke a 43-year tradition by failing to call on Helen Thomas," complained Molly Ivins. "Afraid to take a question from an 82-year-old woman?"

The reality is that, of all the indignities the Bush administration has inflicted upon the media, Bush's slighting of Thomas is by far the most justifiable. She is, after all, now a columnist, and columnists do not typically get to ask questions at White House press conferences. More importantly, her questions are as wildly inappropriate for the forum of a press conference as they are ineffective. It is hard to imagine what admissions could be extracted from questions like, "Does the president think that the Palestinians have a right to resist 35 years of brutal occupation?" Or lectures like, "Why are we killing people in Iraq? Men, women, and children are being killed there. I mean, what is the reason we are there, killing people, continuing? It's outrageous."

At the historic occasion of the first press conference of Bush's first term, Thomas took the opportunity to ask: "Mr. President, why do you refuse to respect the wall between the church and state? And you know that the mixing of religion and government for centuries has led to slaughter. I mean, the very fact that a country has stood in good stead by having a separation—why do you break it down?" Amazingly, this subtle line of inquiry did not force Bush to confess his goal of an American theocracy.

Thomas's fans believe the administration is terrified of her. ("Her questions are so tough that the current administration ignores her," wrote a *New York Times* society reporter.) In fact, the behavior of Bush and his spokesmen suggests that they are grateful for her presence. Fox News often broadcasts her exchanges with the press secretary to bolster its claim that the mainstream press has an anti-Bush bias. As Brit Hume introduced one such clip, "Stay tuned for a look at the dean of the White House press corps in action." Bill O'Reilly, in one of his many diatribes against Thomas, declared, "There are ideologues among [the White House press corps] like Helen Thomas—people who are not looking out for the folks, but who are pushing a political point of view." Former White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer's memoir devotes more space by an order of magnitude to Thomas than to any other reporter, and it spends the better part of a chapter reproducing her diatribes at length.

As GOP Representative Peter King summed it up recently, "I that think Helen Thomas was [Bush's] best weapon. I think it's important for the American people to see that—to see that there's this built-in, almost subconscious or unconscious bias that so many in the White House press corps have against the president."

Thomas's relationship with the Bush administration, in other words, is a symbiotic one, in which both sides have an incentive to play up her role—she, so that she can posture as a crusading icon; they, so they can smear the entire press corps as ideologically biased. Stephen Colbert may imagine the White House press secretaries fleeing in panic at the sight of Thomas. But maybe there's a reason they seat her in the front row. ■

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Hillary Clinton v. Howard Dean. The Grudge

BY THOMAS B. EDSALL

DURING A RECENT appearance on "The Daily Show," Jon Stewart asked Howard Dean about his controversial "50-state strategy," under which the Democratic National Committee (DNC) is allocating significant resources to parties in red states as well as blue ones. How many states, Stewart wanted to know, do critics of Dean's strategy want the Democrats to focus on? Dean replied, "If they had their choice, probably one—New York."

If that was a shot at Hillary Clinton, consider it retaliation. Even before Dean took over the DNC in February 2005, Washington-based Democratic operatives, some aligned with Clinton's presidential campaign, tossed around the idea of trying to sideline Dean in 2008 by creating a position called "general chairman" and appointing Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell to fill it. The putsch was quickly abandoned—Dean had built too much loyalty among the DNC's 447 members to make the plan viable—but Clinton's backers remain determined to prevent a man they view as a loose cannon from undermining their bid for the White House.

The result? Dean and Clinton—the Democratic Party's two power centers—find themselves locked in a struggle for intraparty supremacy. Each camp considers the other's political strategy fundamentally flawed. Dean loyalists dislike Clinton's stance on Iraq and her cautious approach to leadership, and they also fear she is too polarizing a figure to win a general election. Meanwhile, Clinton partisans doubt Dean's competence in managing the DNC and believe him to be just the sort of antiwar, elitist, left-wing Democrat who will scare off white middle- and working-class voters.

What makes the Dean-Clinton struggle so interesting is that it represents an inversion of the party's previous power structure. When Dean began his rise to national prominence in 2003, he portrayed himself as an insurgent who would challenge both the Democratic Party's Washington establishment and the ideological legacy of Clintonism, which he argued had pushed the party too far to the center. That tactic once looked likely to propel Dean to the Democratic nomination. But, today, Dean heads the DNC, and it is Clinton who wants her party's nomination. To win, she will have to make inroads among Dean's followers and loosen his grip on the party's apparatus. This time, it is the Clintons who are the insurgents, but insurgents who represent the Democratic establishment.

THE SCHISM BETWEEN the two camps has its roots in Dean's early 2003 discovery that running against Clintonism held a lot of appeal for Democratic primary voters. Many liberals were hungry for a politician who would tell them what they wanted to hear on Iraq, gay rights, and the role of religion in American life—and, just as importantly, one who would denounce Democratic triangulators, equivocators, and compromisers. On all those counts, Dean delivered. During his presidential campaign and later in his 2004 book, *You Have the Power*, Dean offered a forceful critique of Bill Clinton's centrism. "After nearly a decade of widening income inequalities, campaign-finance scandals, noxious inside-the-Beltway compromises, and political catfights ... the American people felt equally disenfranchised by Democrats and Republicans," Dean wrote. He added, "The Democrats have made a fundamental mistake in watching Bill Clinton and thinking it was his strategy—and not his extraordinary personality—that enabled him to do all the things he did." He continued to press this theme while running for DNC chair, but, instead of citing either Clinton by name, he simply lashed out at the Democratic establishment. "Here in Washington," he said, "it seems that every time we lose an election, there's a consensus reached among decision-makers in the Democratic Party that the way to win is to be more like Republicans." Dean's alternative was simple: "The way to rebuild the Democratic Party is not from the consultants down, it is from the ground up." Such rhetoric continued even after Dean won the chairmanship. This spring, Dean told a group of reporters, "We don't really have any consultants. ... We try to do everything in-house. We don't have a stable of Washington consultants telling us what to do."

That's not exactly true. Dean hasn't done away with consultants; he has replaced consultants loyal to Clinton with consultants loyal to him. Dean spent $2.7 million on political consulting fees during his first 18 months at the DNC, substantially more than the $1.7 million former DNC chair Terry McAuliffe spent in the first 24 months of his tenure, according to PoliticalMoneyLine. The major difference lies in who is getting contracts. Under McAuliffe, between January 2001 and December 2002, Harold Ickes's firm received $122,000; Peter Hart and Associates got $131,000; and the Mellman Group, headed by pollster Mark Mellman, got $111,000. All are Democratic loyalists from the Clinton years. Dean, by contrast, has brought in a consulting network dominated by one company, Blue State Digital, which was started by four former Dean workers immediately after the 2004 campaign. Dean's DNC has so far awarded $664,000 to Blue State, another $254,000 to Blue State founder Ben Self, and $137,000 to co-founder Joseph Rospars.

While Dean was distancing the DNC from Clinton loyalists, his allies in the blogosphere were attacking Hillary Clinton on both ideological and political grounds. To her adversaries, Clinton's positions—especially on the Iraq war—prove that she lacks the authenticity, strength, and heart to stand up against the GOP, the religious right, or

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corporate America. "We literally hold her, and what she represents within the world of progressive activism, to be responsible for the massive progressive backslide that has taken place over the past twelve years," wrote Chris Bowers of the blog *MyDD*. In *The Washington Post*, Markos Moulitsas of *Daily Kos* called Clinton "a heartless, passionless machine, surrounded by the very people who ground down the activist base in the 1990s and have continued to hold the party's grassroots in utter contempt."

NOW CLINTON'S CAMP is seeking to change this landscape. Its strategy appears to be twofold. First, it is laying the groundwork to circumvent the DNC in the event that Clinton wins the nomination. Her advisers see Dean as a maverick, and they want to depend on him as little as possible during the general election. "The DNC is going to be peripheral," says one Clinton strategist. "We are going to have our own field staff, starting way before the primaries begin, right through November 7." He points out that she is prepared to reject public financing during the primaries and the general election. (Clinton does not lack for money: She has raised $32.2 million for her Senate reelection and has $22 million in the bank—all transferable to her presidential campaign, according to PoliticalMoneyLine.) This would allow her to keep the field staff she develops during the primaries on her payroll during the general election—instead of shifting it to the DNC, as previous candidates have done. Plus, in a move widely and correctly interpreted as a rebuke to Dean, Clinton strategist Harold Ickes recently established a private voter database to compete with a similar database being built by the DNC. Ickes's move—as well as Clinton's formidable array of experienced advisers, including Terry McAuliffe, Howard Wolfson, James Carville, Mark Penn, and others—will give Clinton added independence from the DNC.

Second, Clinton and her operatives have begun working systematically to fracture her online opposition. Perhaps the most noteworthy step in this strategy was her July 4 announcement that she would endorse the winner of the Connecticut primary, ditching Joe Lieberman if he fails to capture the Democratic nomination. Clinton's announcement seemed calculated to win plaudits on the Web—and it did. "Good for Clinton," wrote Duncan Black of the blog *Eschaton*. "She should get a lot of credit for coming out and making this announcement," wrote blogger David Sirota.

Clinton's move had traction on the Web in part because it came on the heels of a June 25 announcement by blogger Peter Daou that he had been hired by Clinton's Senate campaign as a consultant. In a farewell note on his *Salon*-based blog, Daou said he was "joining Senator Clinton's team as a blog advisor to facilitate and expand her relationship with the netroots." The acquisition of Daou, engineered by Clinton strategist Wolfson, was preceded by the hiring of the lesser-known Jesse Berney, who ran blog operations for the DNC during the 2004 campaign and who was the online mobilization coordinator for the AFL-CIO in 2005. The Clinton campaign, according to Simon Rosenberg of the New Democrat Network, is "going to try to master [the blogosphere] the way the Clintons have mastered all other aspects of politics. My prediction is they are going to be very good at this."

When talking about blogs, Clinton's advisers now sound conciliatory notes. "The bloggers are passionate, engaged, informed members of the party who deserve to be treated seriously and taken seriously," Wolfson says about a constituency that has denounced Clinton as a sellout, a stooge for corporate America, and the leader of an elite Democratic cabal determined to silence the party's base. "Blogs have earned a seat at the table," says Clinton pollster Penn.

SO WHO WILL win the showdown between Howard and Hillary? In both the long term and the short term, the odds favor Clinton and her allies in the party's more moderate wing. Take the long term first. Many of the troops brought into politics by the Dean campaign are desperate to turn their avocation into a paying profession. Many left-wing bloggers are struggling to survive financially and would love to begin earning salaries as political operatives. For instance, Bowers and two friends, Hale Stewart (aka "bonddad") and David Atkins (aka "thereisnospoon"), recently announced the creation of NetRoots Research, Strategy & Analysis. As bloggers like these enter the competition for consulting contracts and campaign jobs, the pressures of the political marketplace will likely work to moderate idealism—and to make compromise and accommodation more acceptable within the netroots.

In the short term, Clinton's strategy of dividing and conquering the blogosphere will be abetted by the near-impossibility of Web-based Dean loyalists uniting around a single candidate in 2007. Zack Exley—formerly organizing director for MoveOn.org, an Internet specialist on the Dean campaign, and director of online organizing and communications for Kerry-Edwards 2004—puts it this way: "I think Hillary is going to surprise everyone with the netroots. Every candidate who is flirting with the idea of running is trying to do it like Dean did it. You could have ten candidates trying to be the insurgent dark horse. All those candidates are going to split the netroots, leaving Hillary to be the standout." The netroots have simply become too large to be the exclusive agent of any one candidate. With her front-runner status, Clinton doesn't need to actually *win* the blogosphere outright; she just needs to make sure no one else does. And odds are there will be no repeat of 2003, when the liberal blogosphere rallied overwhelmingly to one contender.

That, in the end, may be Clinton's biggest advantage in her battle with Dean. Of course, there is always the possibility that Clinton will falter. But, if she does not, then Dean, with his supporters unable to coalesce behind a single candidate, will likely find himself without a proxy to run against her. Then again, he may not even want one. After all, there is probably only one candidate Dean could ever truly back, and he is sitting out this race. His name, of course, is Howard Dean. ■

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Beirut Dispatch

Sheik Up

BY ANNIA CIEZADLO

In the early hours of September 13, 1997, the Israeli army killed one 45-year-old woman, two Hezbollah fighters, and six Lebanese soldiers in the mountains of southern Lebanon. Later that day, Hezbollah officials viewed video footage of the bodies and confirmed that one of the slain was a precious kill indeed: 18-year-old Hadi Nasrallah, son of Hezbollah's leader, Secretary-General Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah.

That evening, Nasrallah was scheduled to give a speech in Haret Hreik, the southern Beirut suburb where Hezbollah's offices are located. His second-in-command, Sheik Naim Qassem, offered to speak in his place. But, when the Lebanese turned on their televisions that evening, they saw the bearded, boyish face—at 37, looking hardly more than a youth himself—of Hassan Nasrallah.

Though the entire nation knew by then that he had lost his son, Nasrallah didn't mention it. He commemorated the anniversary of the September 13 massacre, a 1993 incident in which the Lebanese army opened fire on Hezbollah supporters. As he spoke, the audience began to clamor: Why wasn't he talking about his son?

To this day, people in Lebanon still talk about what happened next. Breaking off from his speech, Nasrallah noted that the country had given many martyrs the previous night. He recited the names of the soldiers and added, almost as an afterthought, that his son and another Hezbollah fighter were also killed. He thanked God for choosing a martyr from his family, saying that, while he used to feel ashamed in front of families whose sons had died for their country, now he could look them in the eye. Hadi's killing was a victory for Hezbollah, not for Israel, he pointed out: Instead of fighting each other, as in 1993, Lebanon's army and its guerrillas were united. "We are now fighting together and falling as martyrs together," said Nasrallah, as the audience cheered and chanted Hadi's name. "This is a great victory for us, of which we are proud." And then he went on with his speech.

Timur Goskel, then a senior adviser to the United Nations in Lebanon, watched the speech with a pro-Israel Christian family. "This Christian family, who hated everything Hezbollah stood for, they started crying," Goskel recalls.

In the Middle East, political leaders are often old, corrupt, and repressive; just as often, they are the pampered, Western-educated sons of aging dictators. There are also guerrilla leaders, who, if they survive, often end up as petty old despots themselves.

And then there is Nasrallah. Revered by the Shia, respected by his enemies, he has already earned the distinction of being the only Arab leader to evict Israel from Arab land without having to sign a peace treaty. But he is also a religious warrior. Today, as he fights a lopsided military battle against the Jewish state, he is becoming an icon—not just in the Arab world, where he was already a hero, but in the *umma*, the world of Islam. Nasrallah's war is not just a war between Lebanon and Israel, or even between Iran and America's allies; it's a war of myths and images, a battle to transform the Arab and Islamic worlds. Whatever battlefield setbacks Hezbollah may suffer in Lebanon, on this larger stage, Nasrallah has already won.

By Friday, July 14, everyone in Lebanon knew it was war. It was clear that Hezbollah had miscalculated the Israeli response when it kidnapped two Israeli soldiers two days earlier. Israel had bombed the airport and bridges, blockaded the ports, and killed dozens of people, most of them civilians. The Lebanese were succumbing to collective panic, cleaning out grocery store shelves, buying up gasoline, and frantically withdrawing U.S. dollars. After a defiant press conference on the day of the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, Nasrallah had disappeared from sight. Rumors circulated that he had been struck by an Israeli missile; people were beginning to wonder if he might be dead.

Friday evening, at about 8:30, Nasrallah called in to Al Manar, Hezbollah's TV station. He sounded tired and sleep-deprived, like a man living underground. But his voice was firm, and the photograph that accompanied his speech showed, somewhat surreally, his trademark sunny, open smile. He began by offering condolences to the families of the martyrs, who had given their lives "in the noblest confrontation and battle that the modern age has known, or rather that all history has known." He taunted the Arab regimes that had abandoned him and reminded the Lebanese of the victory they had won on May 25, 2000, when Israeli troops withdrew from southern Lebanon.

Then he did something no one from Hezbollah had ever done before. Reminding his audience that he had promised them "surprises," he announced that they would begin momentarily. "Now, in the middle of the sea, facing Beirut, the Israeli warship that has attacked the infrastructure, people's homes, and civilians—look at it burning," he said calmly, almost matter-of-factly. As he spoke, out at sea, an Iranian-made C802 missile crashed into the warship. We could see an orange glow, like flares, shooting up from the sea to the sky.

Everyone tuned in to Nasrallah that night. I live in a mixed Beirut neighborhood, not heavily Shia or even exclusively Muslim. But, when he spoke these words, from the buildings around me, I heard a surround-sound rustle of cheers and applause. Outside, caravans of cars rolled through the abandoned streets, and the drivers honked their horns.

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It was classic Nasrallah, charismatic and pointed, as if to underscore his difference from other Arab leaders. "In the Arab world, you have two kinds of rhetoricians: the very fiery, passionate kind, who make a lot of false promises, à la Yasir Arafat—the typical Arab rambling and passion that gets you nowhere," says Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, a professor of political science at Lebanese American University and author of *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion*. "And you have others who are populist leaders, who are more plainspoken and practical. And Nasrallah is in between both."

With his dramatic attack on the Israeli ship, Nasrallah upped the stakes, and not just for Lebanon. This was the first time any Arab leader had staged an attack on an Israeli target and announced it simultaneously, live on television. It was as though he had heeded the words of Osama bin Laden's closest adviser, Ayman Al Zawahiri, who wrote in a letter to Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, that "more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media."

"Nasrallah, he's becoming like bin Laden—a star," says Lebanese journalist Paula Khoury. "Because now he has this ability to address the world. This is a new thing, and it's dangerous."

Hezbollah's pioneering tactic of massive suicide bombings once inspired bin Laden, becoming a classic in the Al Qaeda playbook. With his current war, Nasrallah is innovating once more, this time in the world of images, creating a new template for speaking to the Muslim world. Unlike the Sunni jihadists, he attacks the enemy's armies, not just its civilians. Unlike Zarqawi, Nasrallah has style. He can match rhetoric to action, as he proved on July 14. And, unlike the lugubrious bin Laden, he can appear practical and pragmatic, down-to-earth—even fun. As Saad-Ghorayeb points out, "What other Arab leader threatens Israel and grins?"

UNLIKE BIN LADEN, and in a country where most political leaders inherit their positions, Nasrallah was born into a poor family. It was 1960, a time when Shia were moving to Beirut in droves, up from the south of Lebanon—much as American blacks had made the great migration, and for similar reasons. The son of a greengrocer, Nasrallah grew up in both southern Lebanon and Karantina, a hardscrabble Beirut suburb.

After the civil war broke out, the teenage Nasrallah joined Amal, a Shia empowerment movement created by the charismatic cleric Musa Al Sadr. When Nasrallah decided to study Islam, an Amal cleric wrote him a letter of introduction to Muhammad Baqir Al Sadr, the revolutionary Iraqi cleric who was one of the leading lights of Najaf (and a relative of current Iraqi militia leader Moqtada Al Sadr). In Najaf, he studied with Sayyid Abbas Musawi, who would later become the leader of Hezbollah.

After Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, Iraq became inhospitable to young Shia clerics, and Nasrallah returned to Lebanon, where he eventually joined the new, Iranian-backed militia. He rose to become a commander, serving as ambassador to Iran and leading battles against Israel in the south. When Israel killed Musawi in 1992, Hezbollah's central command replaced him with his protegé, Nasrallah, then only 31.

Nasrallah surprised the nation—and angered Hezbollah hardliners—when he decided to bring the party into electoral politics, a move that some saw as tantamount to laying down Hezbollah's arms and giving up its guerrilla status. But, in 2000, when Israel pulled out its last troops from the south of Lebanon, Nasrallah became unassailable. And having members in parliament actually protected Hezbollah's arms by giving it legitimacy and power in Lebanon's political sphere. Today, with charity organizations that span the country, 14 of 128 parliamentary seats, and two cabinet ministers, the party is so strong that people describe it as a "state within a state."

But, even more than this savvy political maneuvering, it was his son's death, and his stoic reaction to it, that elevated Nasrallah from a sectarian guerrilla leader to something altogether more potent. In the days after Hadi was killed, Lebanese leaders from across the political spectrum—even Christian warlord and bitter enemy Elie Hobeika—paid their respects to Nasrallah and his wife. Nasrallah capitalized on this moment of popularity, opening the ranks of Hezbollah to Lebanese from all sects and forming the Lebanese Brigades, a unit with several thousand non-Shia recruits. A quintessentially Shia leader—a cleric, even—had transcended his sect to become a national hero.

SO WHY DID Nasrallah, who is nothing if not a master strategist, launch this war now? Most observers think Hezbollah miscalculated, that it didn't expect the ferocity of Israel's response. But, in a way, it doesn't matter: The more Israel pounds Hezbollah and Lebanon's Shia, the more it burnishes Nasrallah's image as defender of the *umma*.

There are others who have been vying for that title. In 2004, a London-based Salafi named Abu Basir Al Tartusi wrote a document called "The Lebanese Hezbollah and the Exportation of the Shi'ite Rafidite Ideology." In the document, as translated by the Search for International Terrorist Entities Institute, Tartusi claimed that Hezbollah is a front group concocted by an unholy trinity of Iran, the United States, and "its foster daughter, the state of the sons of Zion." Its sole purpose is to spread Shia Islam throughout the world and prevent authentic—i.e., Sunni Salafi—jihad.

The notion of a U.S./Iranian/Zionist axis might sound silly, but it carries a lot of weight in the jihadosphere. In June, just a week before he was killed by a U.S. airstrike, Zarqawi echoed Tartusi's claims. In an audio message posted on the Internet, he accused Hezbollah of serving as Israel's security wall against Sunni militants, and, even more bizarrely, he parroted U.S. demands that Hezbollah be disarmed.

On July 21, nine days after his forces kidnapped the two Israeli soldiers, Nasrallah answered Zarqawi and Tartusi. Looking relaxed and reasonable, in a carefully staged inter-

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view with Al Jazeera, he mentioned Zarqawi's statement. "Today, we are Shia fighting Israel," he pointed out, in a peroration not unlike the one he made the day his son died. "Our fighting and steadfastness is a victory to our brothers in Palestine, who are Sunnis, not Shia. So, we, Shia and Sunnis, are fighting together against Israel, which is supported, backed, and made powerful by America." In a brilliant inversion of Tartusi's logic, Nasrallah even suggested that "some Arabs" were collaborating with Israel to smash the resistance in Lebanon.

Hardcore Sunni jihadists, especially those who congregate online, will probably continue to distrust Nasrallah and all Shia. But, closer to the Islamist mainstream, powerful and popular Islamist groups like the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood have come out strongly in support of Hezbollah. On Al Jazeera, the Brotherhood's leader, Mahdi Akef, hailed Nasrallah, saying that "the Lebanese who kidnapped the Zionist soldiers are true nationalists, led by a great man."

WHAT DO THE Shia, his main constituency, really think of Nasrallah and his war? Among the religious majority, especially the moderates who follow Lebanese Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah instead of sterner Iranian and Iraqi mullahs, Nasrallah is adored and respected, an emblem of Islam and Arab pride. According to the independent Lebanese pollster Abdo Saad, people have begun referring to him as the "shadow of God."

But not all Shia are happy. In fact, secular Shia are outraged. Lebanon's Shia merchant class, like all the country's bourgeoisie, has been devastated by the current conflict. And even some of the devout are privately expressing doubts about Nasrallah's promise to rebuild their decimated villages and neighborhoods with the help of a new "friend"—i.e., Iran. "People are sleeping on the ground, and Nasrallah doesn't care," mutters Umm Hussein, a devout Shia woman from Beirut who says she has never criticized the sayyid before. "He said he was going to make Lebanon like it was before. Is he going to bring back the people who died?"

But, in the end, Hezbollah may not care that much about local public opinion. "Of course they're not happy that people are dying," says Saad-Ghorayeb. "But I don't think that public opinion is all that important to them, especially not now."

What matters far more than Nasrallah's eventual victory or defeat is the iconography he has created: that of an Arab leader who, unlike all the others, isn't afraid to defend the *umma*. In just a few weeks, he has succeeded in exporting the Shia jihad—a goal that even mighty Iran has failed to achieve in three decades of trying. "This is not just a war about survival and borders—not so far even a strategic one," says Saad-Ghorayeb. "This is the decisive battle for the region. . . . If he succeeds, then it will reverberate throughout the region." And, if he loses, it may reverberate just the same—and just as violently. ■

The new war.

Just Cause

BY MARTIN PERETZ

LET'S FACE IT: Aside from fighting for themselves, the Israelis are also fighting for us. I do not mean to suggest their own struggle is at all inconsequential. On the contrary. But it is not over the usual stakes that pit peoples against one another. It is not about borders or natural resources or, for that matter, the settlements that have irritated so many of Israel's putative friends. This is, of course, how the peace processors have always seen it—and the fanciful conflict-resolution academics, too. Give a little here, give a little there, and, lo and behold, you'll be getting to "yes." Indeed, for the last quarter-century, many Palestinians (and many of their Arab cousins) pretended that their quarrel with the Zionists was over such quotidian details.

But, at the moment that virtually all of their demands were met, in the last desperate moments of Clinton-time, they could not bring themselves to accept the hitherto unheard-of concessions. They could not even bring themselves to look twice at them. This was the end of Fatah; it had called its own bluff. It was psychologically incapable of walking through the open door.

As for its successor, the ultramontane Sunni Hamas, and its even more chiliastic Shia half-ally in Lebanon, Hezbollah, they do not want any accommodation or compromise, and they do not pretend to. They would be waging war against the Jewish state even if it were contained within the precarious boundaries of the 1949 armistice agreements. Even, in fact, if Israel existed only within the even more precarious limits of the 1947 U.N. Partition Plan. What we are seeing from the two independent centers of "resistance" in Gaza and Lebanon is an existential clash between those who adhere to primitive ideologies and an intellectually curious, democratic society. It is this kind of society—scientific, free-spirited, and, yes, even fun-loving and life-loving—that threatens them and to which they cannot adjust. These traits may constitute the essence of the Zionist achievement, a joyous rejection of everything grim in the Jewish past.

Hamas and Hezbollah made the identical mistake in abducting Israeli soldiers. (And do not forget the other soldiers who were killed at the same time as the kidnappings—and 18-year-old civilian Eliyahu Asheri, murdered, shot point-blank in the head within hours of being taken into captivity.) President Jacques Chirac, who—like Vladimir Putin—has learned very little about Muslim fanaticism despite his bitter experience with it, was perplexed by the ferocity of the Israeli reaction to these deeds. In their bafflement, they show how little they grasp, let alone sympathize

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with, Theodor Herzl's dream for free Jews, expressed in the elegant shorthand that we will "live at last as free men on our own soil and in our homes peacefully die."

The Israeli military does not leave even its dead soldiers in enemy hands. And, given what finally awaits living Israeli captives, there is an even greater compulsion to retrieve the kidnapped. Let's call this ethic "leave no soldier behind." It is a different ethic than the one that animated the hapless administration of Jimmy Carter—with do-little Cyrus Vance in the saddle at State—which was confronted with the abduction of 52 American personnel of the U.S. Embassy for 444 days by the Iranian revolutionaries. No, that's unfair. We, like the weak-willed chief executive, wore yellow ribbons.

This was the transformational moment for Islamic jihadists—and the United States. Henceforth, Muslim fascists were permitted to do anything they wanted. (Ronald Reagan enlisted the Sunni version of these fascists against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The Taliban and its foreign allies—Al Qaeda, for example—went on to torment us even more than the flailing commissars.) I believe that, with wisdom and stealth, we could have brought down Ayatollah Khomeini's regime or sharply clipped its wings. Now it threatens the world with nuclear arms and has confirmed the reign of the backward and crazed in its own society.

It is, of course, the prime patron of Hezbollah. For the Iranians, Israel is the first front in the war against the West, and they supply Hezbollah to do their fighting for them. The Bush administration seems to comprehend the importance of this fact. Moreover, it comprehends that Israel will not agree to any formula that leaves its population exposed to the weaponry and the weapon-wielders of Nasrallah's faithful. And, in a certain practical way, in fact, the army of the mullahs is already in retreat—a forced retreat from the Gehenna it established for southern Lebanon and in southern Beirut.

Israel never had a quarrel with Lebanon. An old cliché had it that Beirut would be the second capital to make peace with Jerusalem. This was a little too facile. But Israel's difficulties with Lebanon were with the people who had hijacked Lebanese turf—first, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the other armed Palestinian schismatics who set up a vicious mini-state and operated across international borders southward into Israel. In 1982, Israel defeated these forces. Yasir Arafat and his men went into exile in Tunis. But, over the years, Hezbollah replaced them with Shia men of pious zeal and many rockets.

After Prime Minister Ehud Barak took the IDF out of its last small salient of occupied Lebanon, Israel succumbed to a failure of will. That failure will not be repeated. Israel's reactions had been either pathetically symbolic (like shattering the sound barrier over Beirut) or altogether passive in response to an unending series of provocations (including indiscriminate rocketry over the frontier). No free country can tolerate this, and certainly no free country that has a sense of its enemy's undisguised intentions.

STRAINING FOR PROFUNDITY, the TV news people have now fixed on the question of proportionality. Of course, it's not only they who have done so. Putin, an exemplar of proportional response everywhere, especially Chechnya, has chastised the Israelis on this count. So has Chirac, who allowed that he would use nuclear weapons against any state that organized a terrorist incident in France. Nuclear weapons, mind you. But, as Chirac and certain reporters press the issue of proportionality, they generate a fog of cheap empathy that obscures basic logic. They preposterously assume that, in the casualties of battle, the outcomes need to be relatively equal. Even-Steven, one-for-one. Having started this war, Hezbollah and its unwitting apologists are, in effect, complaining that Israel is taking unfair advantage of its superior force. This is tantamount to saying the Allies ultimately had superior force in Europe during World War II and had the temerity to use it.

The problem for Hezbollah in this war is that Israel does have greater force, and it will impose greater casualties on the enemy to win it. The problem for Israel in victory is that Hezbollah cannot ultimately be deterred by a military victory that is compromised by a desperate and temporary political solution imposed by the powers. Human life is cheap for millennarians. Israel can decapitate Hezbollah. But it cannot, over the long run and by itself, bar Hezbollah from rearming—especially if Syria and Iran are willing to renew the supply of arms. After all, neither of Hezbollah's benefactors is presently suffering.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS evinced stunning moral and military clarity in the face of international pressure to rush toward a premature resolution, and its Democratic opponents seem also to have accepted its logic, if some a bit squeamishly. Condoleezza Rice has been a compelling voice in the public argument and in the arguments among allies, as well. Yet even she has felt obliged to raise the need for progress toward the establishment of a Palestinian state when she knows it is not any longer the cause of Hamas or Hezbollah. By their actions and in their words, they have conceded that, for them, it is not the existence of Palestine that is at stake, but the very existence of Israel. Independent Gaza is the source of constant rocketry into Israel. It is clear that an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank would be followed by parallel rocketry from there. No, Israel's life is not in peril. It can cope. But it will not resign itself to cope with unending terrorism. That is not a way to live.

The introduction of easily launched rockets and more advanced long-range missiles across the borders of Israel is an augury of what other countries could soon face internally: India, for example, and Russia, too. One day, and soon, ethnic and sectarian terrorists—operating out of relatively self-contained regions (like southern Lebanon) or smaller population centers (like southern Beirut)—will catapult projectile weapons into adjoining cities and areas. The countries so attacked will not respond any more gently than Israel has. ■

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Arm candy, Beltway-style.

Second Wives Club

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

THE STYLIST HAS just finished applying the color to Jeannemarie Devolites Davis's hair, and now the Virginia state senator, who also happens to be the wife of Representative Tom Davis, has 20 minutes of enforced stillness in which to chat on her cell phone. Twenty minutes. That's 1,200 seconds during which the Fairfax County legislator cannot be dashing between Rotary Club luncheons, Chamber of Commerce receptions, and the endless constituent-service functions and fund-raisers that threaten to suck up her every waking moment. That's in addition, of course, to her actual legislative duties and the burden of guiding Virginia toward a brighter future. Toss in parenting commitments, her day job at a small technology consulting firm, and the occasional life-maintenance errand (like a quick color touch-up), and you'd assume Davis's hectic schedule would strain any marriage, much less one in which the husband is a member of the U.S. House.

But, as Senator Davis tells it, she and Representative Davis—now entering their second year of wedded bliss—are a perfect fit. "Since my Senate district is in his House district, my job has many of the same commitments his does," she explains. Her constituents are his constituents, so the couple shares many of the same policy priorities, political concerns, and, perhaps most important, fund-raising networks. Evenings and weekends find the Davises working the same business receptions, nonprofit dinners, and neighborhood fairs. "For us," jokes Davis, "a hot date on Friday night is going to events in the same car." Better still, when the senator winds up double-booked, her congressman can cover for her, and vice-versa. Best example, recalls Davis: After George Mason University made it to the Final Four in this year's NCAA tournament, Tom was scheduled to appear at a huge celebration for the team. "But then Tom had to go back to the Hill for a vote. So I got to stand up on stage with the basketball players, in front of *thousands* of people from my district, and present them with this congressional resolution," she says with obvious delight. "His loss. My gain."

Behold the modern congressional wife. Or, to be more precise, the modern congressional *second* wife. These days, it's not easy to find a woman who can put up with the trials and tribulations of a husband in office—the fund-raisers, the late votes, the constant commuting between the home district and the District of Columbia—and, to put it delicately, it takes many congressmen more than one try. Tom Davis is but one of many lawmakers to blame the demands of politics for destroying his first marriage. "It's miserable on a family—absolutely miserable," he lamented in an April profile in *Washingtonian* magazine, noting that his first wife, Peggy, never knew when he'd be home at night. Davis recalled one instance in which he actually arrived home on time, only to find Peggy on her way out the door: "I said, 'Why are you headed to the movies?' And she responds, 'I can't count on you for anything.' " As Davis acknowledged, the entire family "had to plan their life around me. I don't blame them for that." Happily, the new Mrs. Davis—check that, *Senator* Davis—recognizes that it's all part of the job. "Because we basically do the same thing with our careers and both feel strongly that we need to be out in our districts as much as possible," she says, "it makes it much easier for us than for many other couples where the spouses are waiting at home for the Congress members."

Hence the rise of the unique Washington subspecies of congressional second wife. In some ways, they resemble the second wives of successful men in other cities and other fields: For instance, men being men, the incoming wives tend to be younger and prettier than the outgoing ones. But Washington being Washington, one finds few big-breasted bimbos, vapid socialites, or any of the other trophy stereotypes associated with masters of the universe rewarding themselves for their success. Rather, the ultimate congressional trophy wife is herself a political animal, able to charm donors, handle the press, and spend an entire cocktail party discussing the finer points of last week's Rules Committee hearing on lobbying reform.

In part, it's a template set by the electoral realities of the job: Even blue-state voters might blanch at the thought of their graying congressman dumping his long-time helpmeet for a Beltway version of Anna Nicole Smith. (Some Washington wits joke that congressmen don't earn enough to land themselves *real* trophy wives.) But the biggest issue seems to be that, thanks to the bizarre, unhealthy, family-unfriendly nature of politics, the only women likely to fall for—and survive being married to—a member of Congress are themselves creatures of Washington, rather than, say, hometown sweethearts from Providence or Omaha. It's a situation that, ironically, has only gotten worse under the family-obsessed GOP congressional regime.

In some cases, the second-wife-to-be is assumed to have helped show her predecessor the door (think Randi Fredholm, for whom then-Senator Tim Hutchinson dumped his wife of 28 years, and Callista Bisek, the third Mrs. Newt Gingrich). In other cases, a lawmaker simply decides that he has outgrown his old life—and wife (as when Jon Corzine

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walked out on his 33-year marriage during his second year in the Senate). In still others, it's the wife who calls it quits (the first Mrs. George Allen; the first Mrs. John Kerry). But, whatever the particulars, the noxious effect of politics is generally blamed, and a sociological pattern emerges: Increasingly, the only folks who can stand to be with inside-the-Beltway types are other inside-the-Beltway types.

IN RECENT YEARS, arguably no political theme has electrified domestic politics more than the breakdown of the traditional family. Gay marriage, abortion, teen sex, welfare, drugs, feminism, humanism, unfettered capitalism—you name the issue, some enterprising candidate has used it to demagogue his way into high office. But veteran Washington-watchers know the single gravest threat to the family may well be one that not even the most values-oriented lawmaker is willing to discuss in public: congressional interns.

"They dress just shy of hookers!" marvels one middle-aged Democratic Senate staffer, noting that staff assistants are just as bad. "You get these young women walking around with their belly buttons showing—in these short skirts. It's the damnedest thing you've ever seen!" To be fair, no one has proved a direct correlation between the number of exposed navels and the frequency of marital crack-ups on Capitol Hill. Yet. But the spectacle of shlubby, graying lawmakers adrift in a sea of fawning, nubile "skinterns" is just the most garish example of the notoriously family-hostile life of your garden-variety congress member. Asked about the issue, longtime Washingtonians will spin you a tale both tragic and tawdry: The long hours; the constituent demands; the relentless fund-raising and campaigning; the sweet, pretty young things who understand your troubles and want to make them all go away.

Though it varies in intensity, the onset of Potomac Fever in a lawmaker is as predictable as the annual budget battle. From the moment he arrives in town, even the homeliest, least influential member suddenly finds himself treated like a movie star. "You get a full-time staff and this huge payroll for My Name Inc., and you wind up with all these people working for your own little personal cult of personality—all paid for by the federal government," says Chuck Todd, editor of the political clip service *The Hotline* and a self-professed obsessive about the anti-family culture of Washington. The resulting delusions of grandeur can be tough to take for wives who've known the lawmakers since they were nothing more than small-town lawyers or high school nerds. "These guys get used to a certain lifestyle and a certain level of sucking up," says Todd. "My guess is that's not easy on a marriage, because the wife is not used to sucking up." Particularly for a spouse who played a key role in getting her man elected, the sudden demotion to bit player can be a shock. Observes the Senate staffer, "You're walking into a situation where you go to a cocktail party reception and have all sorts of people making a beeline for your husband and basically ignoring you." Even Hollywood legend Elizabeth Taylor used to complain that her marriage to Senator John Warner was brutally lonely and hard on the ego. "Not only is a senator's wife not heard, she's pretty much not seen," she lamented to *Time* in 1989.

After two decades as the girlfriend and then wife of Representative Sanford Bishop, Vivian Creighton Bishop has watched more than a few congressional spouses struggle to adapt. "Having to spend a lot of time without their husbands" is the toughest adjustment most newcomers make, says Bishop, who was recently elected president of the Congressional Club, a nonpartisan organization for spouses founded in 1908. "The members have to attend a lot of receptions. They have to meet with a lot of constituents as well as corporate people and attorneys." Then there are the floor votes that keep them out until the wee hours. And, of course, the coterie of flirting, fawning women who seem to follow their husbands everywhere. "A huge number of us have talked about some of the females who sort of ignore us or don't want to give us respect as spouses," Bishop says in her soft, measured voice. She recounts one event at which her husband was being fussed over by a female lobbyist who, when the congressman asked if she would like to meet his wife, sniffily replied, "No, I don't want to meet *her*." "My husband was shocked," recalls Bishop. "*I* was shocked."

To help members navigate these rough shoals, the Congressional Club has long hosted orientation sessions—offering tips on everything from weathering press conferences to handling surly Hill staffers—and matched up newbie spouses with more experienced "big sisters." In addition to providing the scoop on schools, housing, doctors, and shopping, the big sisters often wind up offering counsel on how to cope with being shuffled to the periphery of a lawmaker's new life. But, ultimately, there's only so much you can do, and congressional wives without their own power bases often find themselves marginalized—even among the other women. "Congressional spouses who stayed home and did not have a career get utterly dismissed," observes *Washington Post* gossip columnist Roxanne Roberts. "This perception, which has nothing to do with reality, is that they're not interesting and cannot be useful except to influence their husbands."

MORE THAN THREE decades after the fact, the story of the first Mrs. Bob Dole, née Phyllis Holden, remains one of the most heart-rending cases of a woman "outgrown" by her congressional husband. An occupational therapist at the Michigan hospital where the young Bob was sent to recuperate from war wounds, Phyllis asked the handsome World War II hero to a dance at the local officer's club. In June 1948, the couple married, and Phyllis devoted herself to nursing her new husband back to health. (As the story goes, she even attended his college classes with him, taking notes and writing out the answers to tests from his dictation.) Twenty-two years later,

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in December 1970, Senator Dole informed Phyllis their marriage was over. The relationship had been dying for some time, with the senator clocking long hours and seeing less and less of Phyllis and their teenage daughter, Robin. Still, Phyllis made it clear for years afterward that the divorce was entirely Bob's idea and that she remained perplexed as to what had prompted him to end the marriage. A 1996 *Vanity Fair* piece suggested another woman was involved, but Phyllis, Bob, and various observers have long chalked it up to the senator's absorption with his career. As Dole wrote in his autobiography, *Unlimited Partners* (co-written with second wife Elizabeth), "Mine was not the first or, sadly, the last marriage to founder on the political rocks."

Occasionally, a congressman's decision to dissolve a first marriage causes him professional grief. When then–Representative Billy Tauzin left his first wife, Gayle, and then wed former executive assistant Cecile Bergeron in 1993, his Cajun constituents took it hard. Gayle was popular around the district, and observers noted that many voters were angrier about the congressman's dumping the hometown favorite than they were two years later when he announced he was moving from the Democratic to the Republican side of the aisle. Ultimately, the smooth-talking Tauzin managed to mend enough fences to salvage his seat. Former Senator Tim Hutchinson was not so skilled. In 1999, the die-hard Christian conservative offended much of his base when he left his longtime wife for former aide Randi Fredholm. Lingering resentment over the issue is thought to have contributed to his defeat in 2002.

For the most part, however, divorce and remarriage are now so common in the broader culture that they no longer pose a significant political liability. The Hutchinson affair notwithstanding, even self-professed family-values Republicans like House Majority Whip Roy Blunt—who married his second wife a mere six months after the divorce from his first was final—tend to be forgiven for their personal indiscretions come election time. Not that some of the tackier displays of "trading up" don't still raise eyebrows. Take, for instance, the whirlwind romance between Representatives Mary Bono and Connie Mack. Mack arrived in Washington in early 2005. Eight months later, he filed for divorce from his wife of nine years and immediately began showing up arm-in-arm with Bono—who also dumped her husband. Then, of course, there's the Story of Newt, whose marital history evokes as many gasps as snickers. For most men, cheating on one's first wife and then serving her with divorce papers while she is in the hospital recovering from uterine cancer would be the low point. But, twelve years into his second marriage, Gingrich began an affair with Callista Bisek, a Hill staffer 23 years his junior, during which he loudly and self-righteously decried the personal sleaziness of Bill Clinton. The affair went on for six years before Gingrich finally gave second wife Marianne the heave-ho to wed Callista.

Nor is there much of a social price to pay for such splits. When a new wife starts showing up at Congressional Club events, says Bishop, "it sometimes takes older wives a moment to accept her—especially when the older wife was active on committees and had lots of friends. But overall, I don't think there's ever been a case when we just did not accept a new spouse." Indeed, the most awkward situations tend to involve the former spouses: Thanks to a rule change made for Phyllis Dole, congressional ex-wives are allowed to retain their memberships post-divorce. But eventually, says Bishop, most exes wind up feeling uncomfortable and drift away.

IN THE LITANY of travails that contribute to congressional divorce, none is more frequently cited than a spouse's not moving to Washington with her husband. This decision to remain behind in the home district may be driven by any number of reasons: the desire not to uproot children, a spouse's unwillingness to sideline her own career, the prohibitive costs of living in D.C. But, as often as not, the driving force is the lawmaker's fear of having political opponents tar him as a Beltway denizen out of touch with his constituents. Especially on the House side, where members stand for reelection every two years, there is such pressure to keep one's life rooted in the district that the legislative calendar has been compressed so that most business is conducted from Tuesday to Thursday, allowing members to spend the rest of the week back home. In theory, this schedule provides members more time to spend with their families. In practice, it's a domestic disaster, says American Enterprise Institute scholar/superpundit Norm Ornstein. "Having the lawmaker in Washington all week creates a tremendous pent-up demand among the family members," he says. "Then you get home Thursday evening or Friday, and they're all going to be anticipating that, now, it's daddy time. But then you say hello and goodbye and go out to campaign, and you wind up missing them all weekend, too."

While this practice has a long history, Ornstein blames the 1994 Republican Revolution for accelerating the trend. "It was almost a sea change," he asserts. "The new Republicans were coming in to take over Washington not because they wanted to be members of Congress, but because they needed to heal the country from this horrible virus. They didn't want to stay too long, or they might catch it. They *certainly* didn't want to infect their families with it." The pressure mounted, says Ornstein, to the point that lawmakers in both parties now are automatically expected to keep their bases of operations in their districts.

Out on their own in Washington, lawmakers get increasingly wrapped up in their new lives—and their new hotshot status—leaving their wives behind both physically and emotionally. Eventually, notes Todd, "wives start to think, 'My God, he's changed.' " The next thing you know, Congressman X is feeling misunderstood and underappreciated by the missus, even as droves of attractive, politically savvy, ingratiating young women thrill to his every word at committee meetings and Hill receptions. One Hill reporter,

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echoing the views of many, put it succinctly: "The life of a member of Congress is set up for infidelity in a way that I can't think of for any other profession—aside from being a rock star."

Whether or not a lawmaker bows to temptation, every couple of years a juicy domestic spat hits the news, with a member's estranged wife accusing politics of destroying her marriage. When her 33-year union to then–Senator Jon Corzine ended in 2003, Joanne Corzine publicly charged that politics had been a toxic force in their relationship. Two years later, she waded into her ex-husband's race for New Jersey governor, telling *The New York Times*, "All day, people around him were telling him to do whatever he wants to do to get ahead, things that the Jon I've known since we were in high school would have never been comfortable with," she said. "And I think it's made him lose sight of anything but success, getting to where he wanted to get." Even more pointed were Susan LaTourette's remarks in late 2003, after her husband of 21 years, Representative Steve LaTourette, revealed that he was having an affair with a lobbyist and wanted a divorce. "I think Washington corrupts people," a furious Susan announced. "He was a wonderful husband and father, the best I ever saw, until he went there. ... Now he's one of them. All they care about is getting reelected. I hate them all."

IN MATTERS OF the heart, there are no hard and fast rules. But, for an ambitious pol seeking a second wife to satisfy both his personal and professional needs, there are a couple of general guidelines to consider. At the very least, spouses need to be conversant on the hot political topics. "Any woman not equally informed and able to carry on a conversation is considered a liability," says Roberts. Better still is the spouse who can discuss political arcana with her husband's colleagues. "You need somebody who is able to carry on cocktail chatter," stresses the Senate staffer. "You need somebody who will at least have a basic understanding of how the Hill operates and what it means to offer an amendment in committee and who understands what unanimous consent means." And, if the wife has her own BlackBerry full of power brokers and donors, all the better—both in terms of helping her husband network and of burnishing his image among his peers.

Luckily for lawmakers, the odds of running into just such a gal are improved by the fact that members of Congress spend most of their time at work-related events populated by political types like themselves. Thus, the rise of the hot staffer (Mrs. Tauzin, Mrs. Hutchinson, Mrs. Gingrich) and the power lobbyist (Mrs. Tom Daschle, Mrs. John Dingell, Mrs. Blunt) as second wife. "Who knows how many relationships have been forged over bad egg rolls at a reception at the Rayburn House Office Building?" jokes the Senate staffer. In many cases, the bizarre, insular, intense nature of politics is what jumpstarts a romance—even, alas, at the expense of an existing marriage. Observers compare it to what happens on movie sets with Hollywood stars. "These people are human, and this is how their lives are structured," philosophizes social doyenne Sally Quinn. "They're thrown together, and what are they going to do?"

For many, Senator Elizabeth Dole still reigns as the prototypical second wife. "She builds him up and gets her own power in the bargain," summarizes a longtime Beltway TV producer. Other oft-cited examples of second wives forging such win-win partnerships include airline lobbyist Linda Daschle and auto industry lobbyist Debbie Dingell—both of whom have benefited professionally over the years by dint of their husbands' congressional positions (though not in any direct quid-pro-quo way, of course, because that would be illegal). But by far the most notable—and notorious—power union of recent times is that of Roy Blunt and Abigail Perlman, director of government affairs for Altria. Since his 1996 election, Blunt's swift rise in the House has been credited to his close ties to K Street—ties undoubtedly strengthened by his friendly relations with the go-to gal for Altria, which just so happens to be one of Blunt's top campaign contributors. Perlman, meanwhile, could not have asked for a more energetic champion of her employer's interests than her congressional beau. In 2002, within hours of being named majority whip, Blunt quietly inserted a provision benefiting Altria-owned Philip Morris into the Homeland Security Act. Unfortunately for the couple, the measure was pulled as soon as colleagues discovered it, and when Blunt ran unsuccessfully to replace Tom DeLay as majority leader earlier this year, the boondoggle provided his opponents with much ammunition—highlighting the complications that can arise from having a power wife.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, say observers, congressional marriages are much more likely to stick if both parties accept that politics is a demanding, often all-consuming mistress, and they can pull together as a team. That way, says Ornstein, the spouses "have similar rhythms and lives and really understand the dynamics and pressures that go with the job." This, clearly, is what Representative and Senator Davis are counting on. Listening to Jeannemarie wax rhapsodic about the excitement of campaigning, the nobility of public service, and the all-around fabulousness of voters, it's evident that, this time around, Representative Davis doesn't need to worry about his wife resenting his job so much as stealing it.

Of course, no degree of professional compatibility guarantees wedded bliss. And there's nothing more formidable than a hard-charging, win-at-all-costs Washington power player with her eye on your spouse. As the veteran producer wryly observes, among the myriad stresses even the savviest second wife must contend with is the knowledge "that hubby is at all times surrounded by blue-eyed, blonde-haired, scheming *third*-wife wannabes." To put it in Newtspeak, for every Marianne, there's a possible Callista. As any savvy voter can tell you, it pays to keep a close eye on your congressman. ■

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Fearfully Free

DAVID MAMET IS THE MOST versatile American dramatist working today. This is not because he writes for the theater and the screen and television: more relevantly, he ranges widely in style. Mamet characteristics can be seen in all those styles, but they are used to strike different chords. Look only at some of the plays that have been filmed. *American Buffalo*, set in a junk shop, slithers along in a mire of ultravernacular diction as if swimming through muck to self, and to self-justification. *Oleanna*, set in a university office, is written with verbal surgery that reveals buried motives. *Glengarry Glen Ross* uses salesmen's lingo turned oddly lyrical. Yet all these scripts are inarguably the work of the same man.

EDMOND
(First Independent)

Now one of my favorite Mamet plays, **EDMOND**, first produced in 1982, arrives on screen and, among other things, shows again the scope of Mamet's styles. *Edmond* is a long one-act play that takes a very ordinary man—forty-seven years old, dully employed, dully married, even dully despondent—as he manages to break loose from dullness and, seeking reality, encounters more than he can readily deal with. And it is written in what I can only call German Expressionist style.

When I first read *Edmond*, I thought immediately of the flower of that Expressionist school, Georg Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight*. The critic H. F. Garten wrote of Kaiser's play: "It is a *Stationen* drama, depicting a man's evolution in a succession of stages.... In the course of twelve hours, he hurries through various stages, in a frantic quest for a new and intense experience of life." Mamet's play covers more than twelve hours, but it is also a *Stationen* drama, using much of the same minimalist dialogue with occasional explosions, and composed of a series of "stages," rather than scenes, in which a man desperately searches for new intensity.

On his way home from work, low on spiritual fuel, Edmond stops at a clairvoyant's. (Clairvoyants recur in Mamet: see *The Shawl*.) She reads tarot cards and tells him, "You are not where you belong." Imagined tarot cards fleck his mind thereafter. The result of the clairvoyant's counsel comes that evening. At home, after some staccato dialogue with his wife about a broken lamp, Edmond gets up and says he is going.

> *Wife*: Will you bring me back some cigarettes....
> *Edmond*: I'm not coming back.

This simple statement fractures the somnolence of his life: a quick quarrel discloses that he hasn't loved his wife for years and doesn't think she's attractive. Mamet, who wrote this screen adaptation, puts the wife in bra and panties in this scene—apparently to emphasize Edmond's lack of interest.

He leaves. His first stop is a bar, where he has an intimate conversation with a stranger, played by a Mamet familiar, Joe Mantegna. (The bar intimacy itself is a harbinger of *Glengarry Glen Ross*.) Edmond gets a tip on how to slake his sexual needs. In the strip club that he goes to, his very naïveté about prices and custom protects him for a while, but only for a while. His descent into desire continues in a peep show, where again his unfamiliarity with ritualized sin does him in. Encounters with three-card monte players on the street leave him bruised and quite broke. He goes to a pawnshop and, without any such plan, acquires a knife. He uses it on a marauding pimp.

At last Edmond goes home with a bar girl, Glenna, played by the winning Julia Stiles. They make love, then they talk earnestly about themselves—and about possibilities. But the fever of his quest for reality, which has been burning through everything he has been doing, propels him past the rational into the hierophantic, the exalted, the "truth." This truth, which is merely a grotesque compound of his lifelong frustrations, exploding on this night in sex and prejudice and impossible demands, leads to murder.

Edmond ends in prison. A big black man is put into his cell and beats Edmond into granting him sexual favors. In the last scene, the two men are simply living together affectionately. (Edmond is presumably in jail for life.) In the evening he kisses the other man good night before he turns over and goes to sleep.

Thus Edmond's pilgrimage has led him from a mechanized existence into flurries of sexual adventure that he had apparently been fantasizing about throughout his life, and then to the furthest extreme of violence—all construed as a search for reality, for self. And he ends in an unforeseen domesticity, enforced but safe—perhaps another secret he has contained for forty-seven years and is just discovering. Mamet's theme is not that we all share Edmond's particular frustrations and hungers, but that we all have them in one form or another and can be interested in a man who discovers his own.

Mamet has, as far as I can tell, kept every line of dialogue that was in the play. But incisive though the film is, it misses the formal effect of the original. In the play, the twenty-three brief scenes follow one another like separate glimpses of a journey, a sort of mobile slide show (the Expressionist *Stationen*). In the film, Mamet uses connective tissue. For example, when Edmond arrives in prison, he is taken down a corridor of cells with other convicts jeering and yelling at him. In the play, his wife ends her visit to him in prison; then we can almost hear a click, the scene ends,

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and with another such inaudible click, Edmond is in his cell with the black man. No journey down the corridor. The play is like a profane medieval morality play, presenting stages of a pilgrimage. The film is more of a narrative stream. Thus the formality of the play, which is part of its quality, is diluted.

The director, Stuart Gordon, first worked with Mamet in Chicago in 1974 and has since made a name with horror films. Only one touch here—a blood spray—belongs in a horror film: otherwise, Gordon deals fittingly with the script. He has to contend, however, with one of Mamet's favorite actors, William H. Macy. I have never seen a bad Macy performance and have never seen one that I relished. (Well, perhaps the schemer in *Fargo*.) Edmond is the center of this piece, a role created for a virtuoso. In fact, as the play/film proceeds, we can almost see the adjectives gathering around the actor's head—"brilliant," etc.—even if the performance is merely passable. Macy never sets a foot wrong, or especially right. He is as authentic as he can be in all the shades of the role. Still, we rarely sense the Edmond in whom all these feelings have been repressed for decades and who is now both maniacally gleeful and pitifully frightened by the bursting of the dam. What the role needs, and what Macy cannot quite provide, is the sense not of a robot but of a potent man who has been imprisoned by rote. Remember Jack Nicholson in *About Schmidt*. ■

DAVID HAJDU ON MUSIC

The Music of Starbucks

ABOUT FIFTY YEARS AGO, when the Soviets who survived Stalin began to accept the gift of his death, the state's cultural overlords started to loosen their choke hold on the country's music. The Communist Party–controlled Composer's Union consented to music other than programmatic works about collective farming, and *Pravda* acknowledged merit in modernist compositions of Shostakovich that it had previously declaimed as "chaos rather than music." The golden era of musical totalitarianism, a time when the libretto to *Tosca* could be re-written as *The Battle for the Commune*, was passing.

Simultaneously in the United States, the postwar atmosphere of sprawling conformity and eight-cylinder conservatism sparked in the offspring of the World War II generation a countervailing interest in all things bohemian. Dark little coffeehouses inspired by European cafés began to open around the country, and their music was part of their appeal. In Cambridge, the prototypal coffeehouse of the era, Tulla's Coffee Grinder, had only a tabletop radio, but the thing was on all day and night, tuned to the Harvard station, which played a lot of bebop. Live jazz (or spirited approximations thereof) flourished in the coffeehouses that followed, the sax and bongo playing sometimes mixed with beat poetry or broken up by a few songs from a folksinger strumming a guitar.

By the mid-1950s, folk music came to dominate the coffeehouse scene. Earthy, old-fashioned but also trendy, easy to play without training and to sing passably without talent, left-leaning, and held in suspicion or overt contempt by many adults, folk songs fit companionably with the espresso and the imported cigarettes in the musty clubs that young patrons saw as hostels of cultural dissent. By the late 1950s, there were coffeehouses with music in every major American city and college town: half a dozen in Cambridge and the surrounding area (including the Cafe Yana, the Golden Vanity, and Club Mt. Auburn 47); more than three times as many within a few blocks in the bohemian mall of America, Greenwich Village (among them the Gaslight, Cafe Figaro, Cafe Rienzi, Cafe Wha?, and the Hip Bagel); and kindred joints in Berkeley (the Blind Lemon), San Francisco (the Drinking Gourd), Los Angeles (the Gas House), Tampa (the House of Seven Sorrows), Denver (the Green Spider), and St. Louis (the Laughing Buddha), among others.

ABOUT FIFTY YEARS LATER, there are dozens of coffeehouses in every major city in the United States—more than eight thousand in this country now, plus more than three thousand elsewhere around the world. They are all called Starbucks. That is to say, there is a single coffeehouse duplicated some eleven thousand times. The replicant spawn of Tulla's Coffee Grinder, mutated through savvy marketing, Starbucks exploits the egalitarian, outré cool of the postwar coffeehouses in a low-key empire of flawless, impermeable elitism and conformity.

Like its ancestors in Cambridge and Washington Square, Starbucks approached music casually at first. Its outlets always played albums in the background—initially favorites of the stores' sales personnel, and later CDs that Starbucks began offering for purchase through displays on cash-register counters and on swiveling racks in the corners of its outlets. Since 2004, when the chain had a major hit in Ray Charles's final Grammy-winning album of duets, *Genius Loves Company* (coproduced by Concord Records and Starbucks, and promoted heavily by the latter), the organization has been engaged in a grand campaign to expand its business in music. The Starbucks entertainment division (the largest part of which is Hear Music, the company's CD label) has about one hundred employees, and it recently moved from the parent company's home base in Seattle to Santa Monica. Last year, Starbucks sold 3.5 million CDs, many of them albums conceived, produced, and marketed with such authoritarian rigor and with such a narrow conception of their listeners' good that they represent nothing less than the return of state-sponsored music.

Starbucks is a state for our day, a commercial society organized within psychographic, rather than geographic, borders—parameters that are now more meaningful than the old rivers, mountain ranges, roads, and lines of longitude and latitude that cable TV, the Internet, and cell phones render moot. For its citizens, Starbucks serves as an all-in-one marketplace/social center/hideaway, a corporeal version of the Internet, where they can meet and make friends, date, write notes, pay bills, conduct business meetings, even find solitude in the cocoon of iPod earplugs. While they are in

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their new habitat, they also purchase some four million drinks per day.

The Starbucks habitués are united in part by age (under thirty, or so they generally appear), race (more Anglo than otherwise, it seems in outlets outside ethnic neighborhoods), and class (middle and above, presumably), though what most unites them is the aspiration to belong to the young, white, moneyed community that we all perceive Starbucks to be. The company does not post its demographic statistics—wisely, for to do so would be to relinquish its allure. The whole point of paying $4.90 for a frappuccino is not to spend twice the reasonable price for a glass of chilled fat and sugar, but to do so as if such an outrageous act comes naturally, as if money means nothing and the word "frappuccino" means something. It is not in conventional measures of value, but in their absence, that Starbucks's customers find worth, particularly self-worth.

AS THE COMPANY'S CHAIRMAN, Howard Schultz, explained the expansion of Starbucks's music business, "Our customers have given us permission to extend the experience." How did they do that, I wonder. Did they sign a slip? Or has Schultz conflated acquiescence with will, as autocrats in coffee, music, or politics are inclined to do?

The "experience" to which Schultz refers is that of the consumption of taste, be it in coffee, creamy fruit drinks, pastries, or CDs. Indeed, he is leading his company to become an official arbiter of taste in the arts as well as in foodstuffs, an institution interested less in satisfying the tastes of its customers than in instilling them. In the realm of its first business, drinks and snacks, Starbucks displayed a belief in the malleability of judgment that approached contempt for the individual's will. Why call a small drink its opposite, "tall"? Why trademark a word for a size, such as "venti"? Why insist on referring to your salespeople by the Italian term "baristas," with its evocation of both legal counsel and guerrilla warfare? Why, if not to press your authority to the limits of irrationality and to test the boundaries of your targets' passivity?

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STARBUCKS PRODUCES AND MARkets several lines of CDs, one of which, the Opus Collection, picks up the company's principles of linguistic obfuscation and tactical packaging and carries them into music. The series title appropriates the classical-music term for a collection of concert pieces, in order to conjure gravitas, while meaning, essentially, the Collection Collection. Small matter. The greater problem with the series is its manner of reducing musicians with complex bodies of work to simple images to which young consumers of venti frappuccinos can relate. The Opus Collection takes important artists from jazz and popular music—Louis Armstrong, Tony Bennett, Nat "King" Cole, Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald, Marvin Gaye, Billie Holiday, Etta James, Elvis Presley, Sly Stone, Jackie Wilson, and others—and makes them brands.

A great many of the CDs in the Collection focus solely or largely on the musicians' early work, with cover photos that show them young and sexy. (Even when albums include work from late in the artists' careers, as in the Tony Bennett and Ella Fitzgerald CDs, the covers usually present the artists' youthful selves; a notable exception is the Louis Armstrong release, which has a charming photo of a grandfatherly Armstrong mopping his brow.) The Elvis CD, titled *Boy from Tupelo*, draws from his primordial sessions for Sun Records in Memphis and his earliest recordings for RCA in New York, the second batch made while he still had the Sun sound in his bones. The music is ragged and kinetic, irresistible no matter how many times one may have heard it. The Etta James album, much the same, captures the singer in her early twenties, recording her sultry gospel-blues for Chess Records in Chicago. (The final track on the CD, a rocking version of Randy Newman's "Let's Burn Down the Cornfield," comes from a later session for another label.) The Miles Davis record presents the trumpeter fairly early (though not straight out of Juilliard) in pieces of muted beauty recorded for Columbia between 1954 and 1959.

The music is fine, the CDs vexing for the way in which they package every artist as an overly simplified cliché: Elvis the wild country boy, Etta the oversexed blues babe, Miles the sensual mysterioso. Youth comes across as an exalted state. But what of the various other Elvises—the sad zombie of all those interchangeable movies, the aging master of "Suspicious Minds" and "In the Ghetto," the tragic self-caricature of his final years? They are in many ways as fascinating as the Sun-era Elvis, yet they have no place in the Opus Collection. And Miles Davis—he just started to get wiggy and baffling in the early 1960s, with all his experiments in funk and electronics and even hip-hop to come. Marvin Gaye? We get only the boyish Motown wizard, none of the mad satyr who later wanted to name an album *Sanctified Pussy*.

These CDs make no claim to be encyclopedic, though the very idea of the Opus Collection clearly suggests an intent to be definitive. And therein lies their tyranny. According to the promotional text on some of its CDs, Starbucks is "dedicated to helping people discover great music." But discovery is precisely what these discs discourage. There is nothing to discover in a predictable collection of highlights from the glory days of a canonical artist. On the Starbucks CDs, the listener escapes discovery, and is insulated against the challenge and the thrill of listening with open ears to artists of all sorts trying—possibly struggling, perhaps failing—to break free of the golden prison of what they do best and what their audiences expect of them. I have no doubt that Howard Schultz would claim that the Opus Collection CDs should serve as a starting point for listeners, and so they should. But I suspect that they rarely will. The CDs do their job too well. In their limited definitiveness, they are likely to be the end of the Elvis or Miles experience, not the beginning.

If that seems an odd criticism, I can amplify it with a brief story. Having copies of all the tracks on the Ella Fitzgerald Opus Collection from their original releases, I gave the Starbucks CD to a neighbor of mine who is a young rock singer. About a week later, I saw her in the lobby of our building, and she said that she enjoyed the album, a solid anthology of standards including "Lullaby of Birdland," "Miss Otis Regrets," and "Don't Be That Way." I brought up the fact that Ella Fitzgerald loved to experiment and stay up-to-date, and that she

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even did some rock recordings, including a killer version of Cream's "Sunshine of Your Love." I asked her if she would like to hear it. "God, no!" she said. "Don't burst my bubble." In music as in blender drinks, Starbucks is in the bubble business.

ENACTING A TWIST ON THE NOtion of branding popular musicians, Starbucks also markets a series of CDs called Artist's Choice, in which big-name performers present favorite songs recorded by others. The idea is to show the stars as fans, sharing mix tapes with fans of their own. Predictably, some of the choices seem obligatory or designed to impress. Willie Nelson included Django Reinhardt's "Nuages"; Tony Bennett chose the Juilliard String Quartet's recording of Ravel's String Quartet in F Major, II and the Abyssinian Baptist Gospel Choir singing "I Want to Ride That Glory Train." Then, too, a few mild revelations popped up. Sheryl Crow admitted loving Elton John's saccharine "Someone Saved My Life Tonight," and Ronnie Wood of the Rolling Stones included Brian Wilson's delicate "I Just Wasn't Made for These Times." Unfortunately (though predictably, again), none of the Artist's Choice CDs I have heard manages to hang together as a set.

As a class, Starbucks's various compilation CDs are the audio equivalent of those trade paperbacks that impart the hundred and one things a person needs to know to be culturally literate. They provide talking points for potential future interaction with other Starbucks patrons—capital in the social economy of young adulthood. "How cool was Jackie Wilson?" "I know—'*Saaay* you will!'" "Too bad he died so young—you know, after a heart attack onstage." "Yes ... so young—like Sam Cooke!" "How cool was *he*?" With each CD, a listener is granted enough to say for the duration of one grande latte, and with luck, enough to earn an exchange of phone numbers.

Starbucks's music business also includes a small handful of original CDs produced by the company, although they offer little more to discuss. An album of duets between Herbie Hancock and pop stars such as Paul Simon, Annie Lennox, John Mayer, and Christina Aguilera—a brazen attempt to duplicate the formula of *Genius Loves Company*—was a misbegotten waste of the considerable but terminally mismatched talent involved. As for the pair of debut records by young artists—the mopey singer-songwriter Sonya Kitchell and the folk-rockish quintet Antigone Rising—they hint at promise that time might help fulfill.

Starbucks's only new album of significance, *Bob Dylan: Live at the Gaslight 1962*, is new only as a commercial release. Bootlegs of rough, unedited versions of the recorded performance have been sold on Bleecker Street for years. The CD captures Dylan during a tentative period between his eponymous first album, an earnest recording of traditional songs about death (along with two Guthrie-inspired originals), and its stunningly mature follow-up, *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, released one year later. At twenty-one, on *Live at the Gaslight*, Dylan is just beginning to come into bloom as a songwriter. He has delivered one of his first major pieces, "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," and he is nearly done polishing "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right." His set is still filled with traditionals such as "The Cuckoo," "Handsome Molly," and "Barbara Allen," though he sings and plays them with such quirky fire that they seem his own.

The performance on this CD is so dynamic that it is a bit hard to believe that Dylan dreaded playing the Gaslight, as his old friend, the late Dave Van Ronk, relished saying. The titular Mayor of MacDougal Street and host of the popular hootenannies at the Gaslight, Van Ronk used to say that Dylan never liked any of the coffeehouses. In fact, Van Ronk said, Dylan didn't even like coffee. ■

Steven Hahn

The Other American Revolution

FOREVER FREE:
THE STORY OF EMANCIPATION AND RECONSTRUCTION
By Eric Foner
(Alfred A. Knopf, 268 pp., $27.50)

I.

MIDWAY THROUGH HIS new book on emancipation and Reconstruction, Eric Foner remarks on how "unanticipated events"—in this case, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln—"profoundly shaped" the course of the era. Foner finds it "inconceivable" that Lincoln, had he lived, "would have so alienated Congress" as to have faced impeachment, and speculates that Lincoln and his fellow Republicans in Congress would likely have fashioned a Reconstruction plan "more attuned to protecting the rights of the former slaves than the one [Andrew] Johnson envisioned, but less radical than the one Congress eventually adopted." Such a plan, Foner acknowledges, might well have united the North and gained greater acceptance in the white South, thus smoothing the process of sectional reunification and avoiding the struggles and political violence that left bloody and painful scars on the nation for generations to follow. But, he asks, would such an alternative, however appealing in some regards, "have served the nation's interests, and especially those of the former slaves?"

Foner's question defies the reconciliationist narrative that has long focused popular opinion on the importance of healing the nation's wounds—and has long demonized Reconstruction as a dark, vindictive, and misguided episode in our history. Yes, it is said, the Civil War was an awful and divisive conflagration, and one that suggested the limits of our political institutions. But in the end both sides agreed to lay down their arms and rebuild the country, a project that would have been hastened were it not for the Radical Republicans who took charge of Reconstruction in 1867 and the white supremacist vigilantes who fought to defeat their initiatives.

Steven Hahn is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of A NATION UNDER OUR FEET: BLACK POLITICAL STRUGGLES IN THE RURAL SOUTH FROM SLAVERY TO THE GREAT MIGRATION *(Harvard University Press).*

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Consider a recent example of the reconciliationist school, Jay Winik's highly touted *April 1865*, which celebrates Grant's offer and Lee's acceptance of generous terms at Appomattox. Winik, who covered civil wars elsewhere in the world during the past two decades and knows how inconclusive they can be, never asks if Grant's magnanimity served the interests of African Americans, who had themselves endured more than two centuries of slavery and helped to save the Union. But Foner does ask the question, in an arresting and confounding manner; and so he reminds us that talk of the "national interest" at any point in our history generally ignores African Americans, or at least tends to code the "nation" white. And this is a measure of the challenging ways in which Eric Foner has re-oriented and reshaped our understanding of the past.

FONER IS THE DEWITT CLINTON Professor of History at Columbia University, where he has been for most of his adult life. Like his mentor Richard Hofstadter, he has had an enormous influence on how other historians, as well as a good cut of the general reading public, have come to think about American history. This is the result of his voluminous scholarship and of his decades as a teacher. Indeed, when one considers the chronological and topical range of Foner's many books and essays—not to mention those of his doctoral students—only Hofstadter, C. Vann Woodward, David Brion Davis, and, in an earlier era, Charles Beard (who was also at Columbia) would seem to be his genuine rivals in impact and accomplishment.

Foner has reached across the span of American history in *The Story of American Freedom* (1998) and *Give Me Liberty!* (2004). He has explored the radical political impulses of the latter half of the eighteenth century in *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (1976), and has confronted the interpretive contexts of historical writing in *Who Owns History?: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (2002). In an innovative book of lectures, *Nothing but Freedom* (1983), he considered the slave emancipation process in very broad comparative perspective. Yet Foner's greatest energies have been devoted to the nineteenth century, and especially to the era of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Here his imprint has been wide and deep, and *Forever Free*, a book written chiefly for a non-academic audience, shows many of his important thematic marks.

The very title, *Forever Free*, with its subtitle joining emancipation and Reconstruction, not only identifies the central interpretive thrust of Foner's new book, but also reflects one of his major conceptual interventions, developed most fully in his justly acclaimed *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*, which appeared in 1988. Unlike previous historians (regardless of their viewpoints) who understood Reconstruction principally as a political process meant to re-unite the nation, Foner sees it as a social and political process—a social and political revolution—commencing with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 rather than with the Confederate surrender at Appomattox in 1865.

In this, Foner extends the remarkable insights of W. E. B. DuBois, whose *Black Reconstruction in America*—which appeared in 1935 and was long ignored by professional historians—placed slavery, slaves, and ex-slaves at the center of the great drama of national conflict. African Americans emerge as powerful political actors in *Forever Free*, as they did in DuBois's book. Their individual and collective decisions, their struggles, their challenges to authority, their courage in the face of repression, and their visions of freedom put emancipation on the table of Civil War policy, in Foner's judgment, and a new set of rights claims on the political board of Reconstruction. In the vivid pages of *Forever Free*, we become acquainted with these extraordinary people, some well-known, some virtually unknown—Robert Smalls, James K. Green, Henry Adams. We are also offered riveting images from the period and six stimulating essays by Joshua Brown on the changing visual culture of race and equality in nineteenth-century American society.

AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE NOT, of course, the only powerful actors to appear in *Forever Free*. Lincoln, Johnson, Sherman, and Grant, among other familiar political and military leaders, all have prominent parts. So, too, do the Radical Republicans, who have figured crucially and have been represented sympathetically in Foner's writings since his very first book, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (1970), a pathbreaking treatment of the ideology of the Republican Party in the 1850s. But African Americans drive the action in *Forever Free*. And Foner's ideas about the historical sources of black activism have developed significantly. Twenty years ago, in *Reconstruction*, he saw slaves coming to political life largely when the Civil War began and various groups of Northerners (black and white) came into contact with them; now he sees the experience of enslavement as establishing the foundations on which the new politics of freedom would be built, as African American slaves, in the face of their masters' enormous power, constructed their own relations, institutions, and sets of political beliefs and practices. "It is essential to bear in mind," Foner writes, "the overwhelming economic and political power of slavery in order to appreciate the radicalism of emancipation and Reconstruction."

Foner therefore begins the slavery chapter (the first, and the longest, in the book) with an account of General Sherman's meeting with twenty black ministers (most of whom had been slaves at some point in their lives) in Savannah, Georgia in early January 1865. Here we learn of the richness and the density of black hopes at the moment of emancipation. Defining freedom as the opportunity to "reap the fruit of our own labor, and take care of ourselves," one of the ministers, speaking for the group, thought it necessary "to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor." Three days later, Sherman issued his Field Orders No. 15, reserving 400,000 acres of prime plantation land along the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia for exclusive black settlement, to be divided into forty-acre plots and made available to black families together with the use of army mules (the basis of the expression "forty acres and a mule").

RARELY HAVE THE ASPIRATIONS and sensibilities of slaves and freedpeople—or of any working people—made themselves felt so directly on public policy, and toward what were unmistakably revolutionary ends. The freedpeople had some allies in the national government, and also among the Northern public, who supported land reform not only to place black freedom on a secure basis but also fully to break the back of the antebellum slaveocracy and the plantation system over which it had presided:

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to create in the South a society more resonant with what they valued in the North. But land reform threatened property rights throughout the nation, in a way in which the abolition of property in slaves never quite did; and so those allies were relatively few in number and summarily defeated. The social revolution of the middle period would have clear limits.

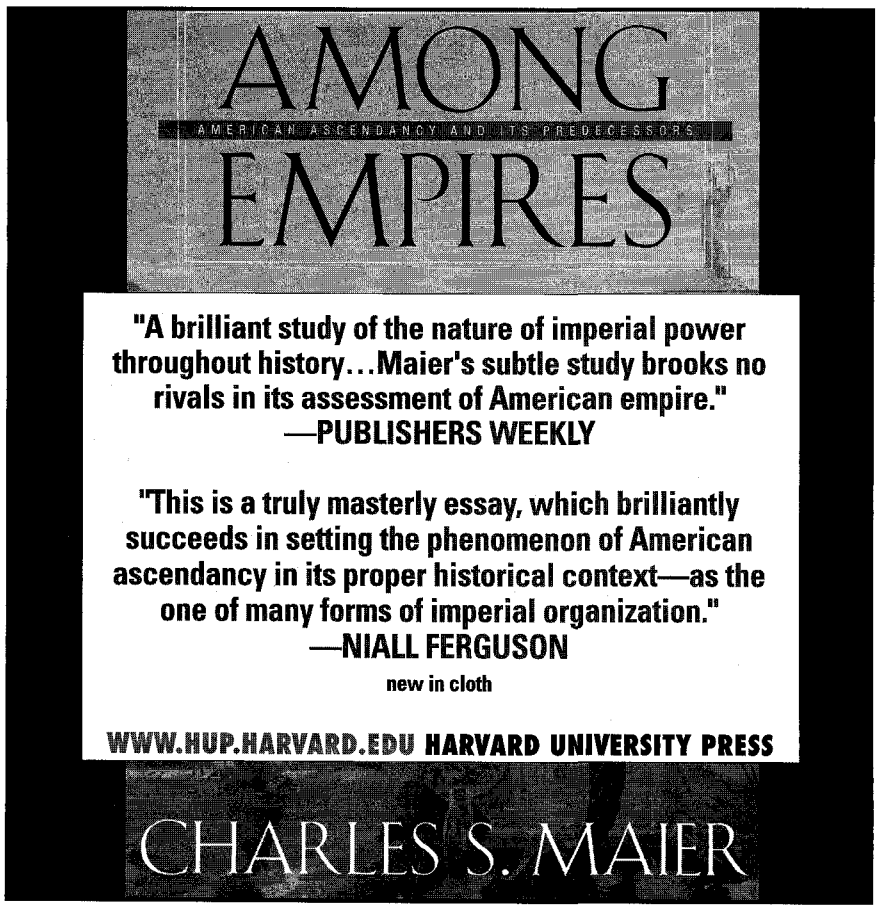
Yet here, and elsewhere in his scholarship, Foner focuses on another revolution that the Civil War and Reconstruction made possible, and one that, in his view, remains incomplete. This was the political revolution that extended the franchise to African American men and laid the basis for an "interracial democracy" in the South, and in the United States more generally. Given the conditions of political life in American society at the time of the Civil War, Foner's view would seem to have a good deal of merit, however much it dissents from several decades of revisionist historical writing.

That revisionism began by adopting the idea of American political exceptionalism—the notion that America stood apart in the Atlantic world in its early embrace of democratic politics and practices, and in the steady expansion of democratic rights thereafter. Black enfranchisement thus appeared to revisionists as part of the Whiggish logic of American political history, advanced chiefly by liberal white leaders, who were applauded for their efforts rather than condemned for their vindictiveness, as they had been by a previous generation of Southern apologists.

FONER'S WORK COMPLICATES THIS optimistic narrative. He reminds us of how complex and contested America's early political history was, of how deep an imprint the interests of slaveholders and their allies had left on it. By the eve of the Civil War, despite a period of democratization in the Jacksonian years, the country was effectively a native-born white man's republic. Women had campaigned for political rights and been defeated. Free blacks in the North had campaigned for political rights and been defeated. Slaves in the South (who constituted 40 percent of the population there) had been excluded from civil and political society. Immigrants, especially poor Irish immigrants, faced increasing obstacles to their political participation and increasing hostility from native-born Protestants. The federal government had enacted a tougher Fugitive Slave Law, which gave slavery a basis in every state. And the Supreme Court, in the infamous *Dred Scott* case in 1857, had determined that black people, slave or free, could not be citizens of the United States, and indeed had no rights that whites "were bound to respect."

It was, in sum, scarcely imaginable in 1861 that slavery could have been abolished in anything but a gradual way (as it was abolished in the Northern states), let alone that former slaves could have won civil and political rights in relatively short order. Yet revolutions can reconfigure the imaginative landscape; and while Foner grants Lincoln and the Radical Republicans significant roles in advancing the course of revolution (he offers a particularly useful and nuanced reading of the Emancipation Proclamation, "perhaps the most misunderstood important document in American history"), he sees African Americans as sparking the revolutionary impulse. They fled their plantations and farms in great numbers and forced the Lincoln administration to confront directly the problem of slavery. They pressed to serve in the Union armed forces and eventually enlisted in the many thousands. And, celebrating their military service in defense of the nation, they came to demand what antebellum America had explicitly denied them: full citizenship.

The results were nothing short of breathtaking, and on a world-historical scale. The Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery without gradualism or compensation to slaveowners. This set the American South apart from every other slave society in the Atlantic world, with the exception of Haiti. So, too, did the Fourteenth Amendment, the Military Reconstruction Acts, and the Fifteenth Amendment, which established a national citizenry and incorporated people of African descent into American civil and political society. For the first time in our history, the "right to vote" was inscribed in the federal Constitution. "Reconstruction," Foner insists, "represented less a fulfillment of the [American] Revolution's principles than a radical repudiation of the nation's actual practice of the previous seven decades." White South-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erners of the day, and Southern sympathizers ever since, would likely have agreed with this assessment, even if such radical repudiations contributed, for them, to the illegitimacy and the corruption of the Reconstruction experience: the spectacle of carpetbaggers and illiterate blacks marching to the polls, sitting in the state legislatures, making policy, adjudicating court cases, taking bribes, imposing high taxes, tramping on the rights and prerogatives of defeated Confederates, and transgressing the rules of race and sex—a world truly turned upside down.

Foner understands the radicalism far differently. Black enfranchisement, in his telling, led to a groundswell of political mobilization in town and countryside alike, as former slaves organized Union Leagues and Republican Party clubs, educated each other and debated the issues of the day, formed alliances with white Republicans who were native to the South (known as scalawags) or from the North (known as carpetbaggers), nominated candidates for state and local office (most of whom were white), and helped rewrite state constitutions. The picture he paints is not one of ignorant black folk being manipulated by their betters or wreaking vengeance on their former owners. His picture depicts black men, and black women, transforming political skills they had developed under slavery and, in the process, creating the possibilities for the first genuine democracy that the South ever had.

IN *FOREVER FREE*, AS IN *RECONSTRUCTION*, Foner devotes a great deal of attention and energy to this political revolution's dimensions. Almost everywhere in the former Confederacy, Republicans took control of state governments and began not only to rebuild the economic infrastructures (especially railroads), but also to construct new institutions of civic life for black as well as white Southerners. Perhaps most consequential were the South's first systems of public education: although racially segregated, they provided African Americans with access to new forms of personal and community empowerment. In some states, such as South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana, where black legislators sat in substantial numbers, issues of land, labor, and civil rights were tackled (and in some cases carried forward) too.

Yet the most stunning changes brought about by Reconstruction's democratic revolution were to be found at the grassroots. In the heart of the plantation districts, where large slaveholders had once ruled, former slaves came to serve as grand jurors, councilmen, supervisors, magistrates, school commissioners, surveyors, treasurers, and even as sheriffs. In some places—McIntosh County, Georgia; Edgefield County, South Carolina; Adams County, Mississippi—enclaves of genuine black power took shape, challenging the long-held hegemony of white landowners and other employers. More widely still, African Americans had the opportunity to serve on trial juries, thus offering their communities avenues of grievance and measures of justice that previously had been unavailable.

White Southerners, and especially white property owners, were not amused. For them, black political empowerment at the state and local levels manifested the fundamental illegitimacy of Reconstruction, and threatened the very bases of the racial hierarchies they had constructed. "Negro rule," they called it; and they fought back with ferocity. From the moment of black enfranchisement, they organized paramilitary companies—the Ku Klux Klan, the White League, the Red Shirts—and tried to make a mockery of electoral methods. They intimidated Republican voters, assassinated black leaders, drove out duly elected officeholders, and on occasion set up dual governments. The ballot box seemed to register which side had more weapons or had taken control of more polling places. It appeared to be a particularly turbulent variant of latifundist politics.

White paramilitarism would have presented black and white Republicans with difficult challenges under any circumstances. But, as Foner argues, those challenges proved increasingly intractable because the Republican coalition was itself divided and the federal government, over which the party held sway, was increasingly reluctant to intervene. Although African Americans composed the rank and file of the Republican Party in the South, party policy there and elsewhere was made by white men closely aligned with the sectors of banking, commerce, and manufacturing. Their interests were in solidifying Republican power nationally, and in promoting commercial and industrial development. And as labor unrest stirred throughout the country after the Panic of 1873, they came to sympathize more with the travails of white Southern landowners and less with those of black Southern laborers.

Republican governors in the South were reluctant to mobilize state militias to protect the rights of Republican voters, since many of the militiamen would be black and armed, and President Grant, a Republican, was reluctant to send in troops to shore up Republican regimes under siege. Rather than recognizing paramilitary politics for what they were and attempting to defend their black allies, most white Republican leaders instead tried to cut deals with their opponents and, in the end, to blame the victims for corrupt and

The Geese

(A Cento)

(for Jaf)

After the sun was down and dusk had come
Peering through half-shut eyes, I saw the geese

This must be somehow satisfactory

For when you died by your own hand we lost
Wild geese and arrow-throated cranes and swans

Horned owls, falcons, cormorants—long-tongued
Whose spreading wings I neither track nor care for

The two moved out into the darkness, leaving

A space that seemed free of the dead. The living
Will comb the wide world for it, people say

The loyal and respectful and the shirkers

Everyone knows the truth of that. In your case
Still it is hard not to be taken in

You—you would have me put my faith in birds

LARRY BRADLEY

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anti-democratic practices. Appropriately, the last Republican governments in the South (South Carolina, Louisiana, and—yes—Florida) fell when the contested presidential election of 1876 produced a settlement and President Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew the few troops left guarding the statehouses.

II.

When did Reconstruction finally come to an end? Most historical accounts identify the end of Reconstruction with the toppling of the Republican governments and Hayes's withdrawal of federal troops, but in truth the answer is less straightforward. Before the nineteenth century was out, Republicans would again hold state power in the South: in alliance with the Readjusters (an insurgent movement organized around the issue of state debt repayment) in Virginia, and in alliance with Populists in North Carolina. African Americans would continue to vote in substantial numbers, and in some places to hold local, state, and national offices, at times as Republicans, at times as independents, and at times owing to "fusion" agreements with Democrats. And the federal government would continue to keep an eye on elections in the South, and to threaten intervention when federal laws were violated. Small wonder that Southern white supremacists widely associated the end of Reconstruction not with the withdrawal of federal troops but with the disfranchisement of black voters in the 1890s and the following decade.

Foner is keenly aware of the interpretive complexity, and he asks us to think about the periodization of these decades on two levels. On the one hand, he regards the withdrawal of federal troops and the restoration of "home rule" to the South in 1877 as a moment of enormous political consequence in what he calls the "abandonment of Reconstruction." The way was thereby cleared for the establishment of the "Jim Crow" South, for new forms of domination and repression, for social separation and political exclusion. African American communities were left on the defensive and pretty much to their own devices. Booker T. Washington accordingly emerged as the pre-eminent national black leader.

On the other hand, Foner conceives of Reconstruction as initiating a struggle for political democracy and racial justice that would be ongoing, derailed but not wholly defeated, driven underground but not silenced, capable of being re-invigorated and re-asserted. It is America's "unfinished revolution," even though Foner terms the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s the "Second Reconstruction," which, he argues, "embraced the ideals and in many ways fulfilled the revolutionary political and social agenda" of the first.

So was there one Reconstruction? Two Reconstructions? An "unfinished" Reconstruction? These are large questions of American social and political development, and one wonders whether the lack of conceptual clarity here is owed to tensions in Foner's own intellectual and political perspective, particularly involving matters of class and race.

Foner has long been a leader among historians in advancing a class analysis of the American past. *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* argued that the Republican Party grew out of a dynamic capitalist society in the antebellum North and organized the aspirations of an emerging middle class around a critique of the slave South and an ideological celebration of free labor. Foner heralded the role of the party's radical wing, and downplayed, though acknowledged, the racist and nativist currents that could be found among Republicans of various stripes. He effectively did for the North what the Marxist historian Eugene D. Genovese, in *The Political Economy of Slavery* in 1965, did for the South: he made a case for fundamentally antagonistic societies developing within the borders of the United States, each based on discrete forms of class relations. Conflict was unavoidable.

Foner has developed a sophisticated class analysis that takes ideology and politics very seriously. He has understood the Civil War and Reconstruction—and the emancipation process more generally—as a struggle over the meaning of free labor, and over the civil and political standing of free laborers. In *Reconstruction* and in other writings, he saw many of the obstacles to change in the contradictions and limits of free labor ideology and of the social groups that had come to embrace it. Class matters, he has insisted; and in so doing he has given the study of American politics an impressive reach and depth, and has placed the Civil War and Reconstruction in a broad historical and international framework.

At the same time, Foner's efforts to put the black struggle for freedom, justice, and equality at the center of the Reconstruction story has the effect of shifting the analytical emphasis away from class and the dimensions of class power. Clearly hoping to counter the negative images still common among the public, Foner is at pains to show that Reconstruction made possible something America never had before, and presumably something most of us would value: an interracial democracy. Here the "story of American freedom" reached an exceptionally dramatic stage, one that gave meaning and substance to a highly contested idea, and one that would continue to galvanize the disfranchised and dispossessed despite political setbacks and savage repression. In this way, Reconstruction could be understood either as ongoing or as periodically re-enacted.

There is something intriguing and compelling about a Second Reconstruction coming nearly a century after the first, and some of the parallels (the monumental Supreme Court decisions in 1857 and 1954, the assassination of Northern presidents and the ascendancy of Southern vice presidents named Johnson, electoral turning points in 1876 and 1968, to name a few) are outright eerie. Yet the similarities may be more apparent than real, all the more so as we come to recognize that popular mobilizations for civil rights began as early as the 1920s and may more usefully be seen as part of the anti-colonial, pan-African, and social democratic impulses of the three decades after World War I.

The idea of Reconstruction as an "unfinished" or re-enacted revolution also rests heavily—perhaps too heavily—

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on a close association between African American aspirations and the goals of civil and political equality, full citizenship, and integration. There can be no question that the association was, and remains, a powerful one. But what of those black ministers in Savannah who told General Sherman that freedom meant reaping the fruits of their labor and taking care of themselves, and that they wished to farm their own land and live by themselves, separated from whites? They made no mention of civil rights, voting rights, or citizenship. Their interest was in community reconstitution, economic independence, and self-governance, and given the near unanimity of their sentiments (only one of the twenty ministers dissented), we must assume that those feelings were widely shared among men and women coming out of slavery.

Foner recognizes these proto-nationalist and separatist tendencies—more so than he did in *Reconstruction*—but he still attaches the greatest significance to the ends of citizenship and interracialism and regards separatism chiefly as the product of Reconstruction-era (and later civil rights–era) political disappointments and defeats. This perspective enables the various political and cultural projects that funneled into Reconstruction to meld comfortably. Yet if black proto-nationalism and separatism were more consequential and more deeply embedded than Foner allows, as may well have been the case (especially among rural ex-slaves, who were the overwhelming majority of ex-slaves), then those were the tendencies that provided the context for black understandings of citizenship (rather than the other way around), and the projects of Reconstruction seem far less in alignment.

RECONSTRUCTION, THAT IS, may be properly understood in connection with American state-building and with an assortment of American popular movements. First and foremost, Reconstruction brought to fruition a process that had commenced with the American Revolution and the Constitution: a process of establishing a modern nation; determining the relation between federal, state, and local power; and defining the civil and political standing of people living within the country. The process was highly explosive, principally—though not exclusively—because of slavery; and it eventually provoked a rebellion on the part of slaveholders against the presumed authority of the national government.

In this sense, it is arguable that Reconstruction began when federal troops first set foot on Confederate soil, although Foner is undoubtedly correct that the Emancipation Proclamation set the course of Reconstruction in a revolutionary direction and united for a brief period the political interests of Radical Republicans and African Americans. Indeed, Reconstruction showed the influence of several popular movements that had emerged in previous decades and then battled to leave their marks. These included middle-class social reform movements, movements for economic and political nationalism, movements against slavery, and movements for race equality and gender equality.

Needless to say, the relations between these movements were intricate and ever-shifting. At times many were brought into close alliance, and at times alliances faltered and conflicts erupted. The possibilities for Reconstruction seemed to be changing almost constantly, and there were moments, particularly between 1863 and 1868, when not only emancipation and black civil and political equality, but also land reform and women's rights, were on the table. In the end, however, moderate and conservative Republicans, who generally shared the views of manufacturers, bankers, farmers, and white Protestants oriented to the domestic market and to a range of social and cultural practices, took charge of the Reconstruction process and defined its limits. The abolition of slavery would be inscribed in the Constitution, a national citizenship would be proclaimed, equality before the law and the right of contract would be consecrated, and the sovereignty of the federal government would be settled—but federal jurisdiction would also be hedged, land reform rejected, and women's political rights defeated. Compared to the political world of pre–Civil War America, this was truly a new one, brought about through revolutionary transformations; but with the restoration of "home rule" to the former Confederate South, or perhaps with the Dawes Act of 1887, which sought to break up tribal sovereignties among Native Americans (the trans-Mississippi West is part of the story of Reconstruction too), this revolution, in its own terms, could be considered "finished."

African Americans, as Foner persuasively argues, played a central part in turning the political crisis of the Civil War era into a revolution and in remaking the nation. Still, the activities and the demands of slaves and freedpeople that proved so consequential in wartime and Reconstruction had very deep roots and very distinctive dynamics. They involved claims to local empowerment as well as to formal rights, which pressed well beyond what Republican policy-makers, even radical ones, were prepared to accept. Their developing agenda simultaneously looked back to a peasant politics of land, kinship, and community and anticipated a twentieth-century politics organized around, as DuBois put it, "the color line." Which is to say, black struggles gave shape to Reconstruction, but they were not identical to it.

WHAT *WERE* ONGOING AND "unfinished" were popular movements for freedom, democracy, empowerment, self-governance, and citizenship. They almost continually pressed upon the arenas of America's formal politics, and could make themselves felt with great intensity at times of political instability and crisis. One thinks, for example, of the years between 1932 and 1965, perhaps even more appropriately called a "Second Reconstruction," when mobilizations of working and other humble folk of different races and ethnicities helped to refashion the nature of state authority and the social compact, creating as much of a social democracy as the United States has ever had.

The civil rights movement emerged out of the struggles of this extended period, though it showed, like its Reconstruction-era predecessors, complex and contradictory tendencies. Some of the tendencies (integrationism, egalitarianism, non-violence) have been celebrated and embraced; others (separatism, nationalism, armed self-defense) have been vilified, ignored, or disowned. At all events, however much we may seek to parse them, these tendencies are intricately entwined in African American communities. We have yet to appreciate fully this political and cultural intermixture, or to understand what it has meant for modern American society. But as we do, Eric Foner's work and commitments, in *Forever Free* and elsewhere, will not only guide our efforts, they will also remind us of how central African Americans have been to the nation's history and to the national interest. ■

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Adam Kirsch

The Myth of Me

AVERNO
By Louise Glück
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 79 pp., $22)

MORE THAN THIRTY years ago, Louise Glück wrote her first poem about the figure of Persephone. Like all the Greek myths that stay alive, this one is valuable for its Rorschach quality, its ability to interpret its interpreters; and so it proved in Glück's "Pomegranate," from her collection *The House on Marshland* in 1975. For the young poet, Persephone was significant not as a cosmological emblem, or as a victim of predatory masculinity, but as the archetypal rebellious daughter. In Glück's telling, Persephone does not need to be kidnapped to be taken from Demeter, only seduced away from her mother's emotional tyranny:

> When he looked up at last
> it was to say My dear
> you are your own
> woman, finally, but examine
> this grief your mother
> parades over our heads
> remembering
> that she is one to whom
> these depths were not offered.

What makes this poem so characteristic of Glück is not just its use of myth or its dramatically narrow column of free verse, though these continue to shape her poetry today. Rather, "Pomegranate" reveals Glück's fierce identification with the heroine of a family romance. Demeter may be a goddess, but by comparison with Persephone she is shallow and passionless, a bit player in someone else's myth. Access to perilous, sexualized "depths" is the preserve of the daughter-poet, who is willing to descend to Hell in exchange for the insight, and the glamour, that such an ordeal provides. That this glamour continues to hold Glück in thrall is suggested by the title of her new collection, *Averno*, which refers to the crater that the Romans believed was the entrance to the underworld. It was Persephone's departure gate.

THE BOAST OF DEEPER KNOWLEDGE gained through deeper suffering is one of Glück's favorite rhetorical devices. She is forever flaunting this superiority before the reader: "And you who watch him/looking down in the face of death, what do you know/of commitment?" she demands in "Brooding Likeness," from *The Triumph of Achilles* (1985). "Hear me out: that which you call death/I remember," she declaims at the beginning of *The Wild Iris* (1992). "You, in your innocence, what do you know of this world?" she asks in *The Seven Ages* (2001). And now, in the title poem of *Averno*, her tenth collection, Glück continues to warn, to berate, to brag: "And I want to scream out/*you're all of you living in a dream.*"

Passages like these, and there are many in Glück's work, suggest a poet who is very concerned with proving her claim to authority, and who believes that the true basis of authority is authenticity. But Glück's brand of authenticity, as she has been at pains to insist, is not merely biographical. This is an important distinction for a poet who started writing in the late 1960s, when the great wave of confessional poetry was beginning to crest. The polemical thrust of Glück's intelligent book of essays, *Proofs and Theories*, which appeared in 1994, is to discredit confessional "honesty" and "courage" as poetic values: "The truth, on the page, need not have been lived. It is, instead, all that can be envisioned," she writes in an essay bluntly titled "Against Sincerity."

Glück does not write confessionally about madness, suicide, and incest, as though these extreme experiences were a poet's only access to reality. But neither does she reject the ideal of extremity; she merely denies that it has to be lived in order to be written about. She insists that it is not the content of experience that allows it to rise to the intensity of myth, but the will that the artist brings to it. If Glück is "against sincerity," she is completely enthralled by authenticity, in just the sense that Lionel Trilling intended: an "extreme ... exercise of personal will." Her work is a tour de force of this kind of will: every facet of her poetry is designed to heighten its rhetorical intensity, to leave the reader awed and dazzled by the poet's capacity for deep and difficult experience. Her aesthetic ideal is not delight but "candor," as she writes in "October," from *Averno*:

> It is true there is not enough beauty
> in the world.
> It is also true that I am not competent
> to restore it.
> Neither is there candor, and here I
> may be of some use.

Candor, however, is an ambiguous concept in poetry. To be candid is usually to speak unpremeditatedly, thinking only of the matter, not at all of the form; but this is just the kind of speech that poetry, if it is really poetry, cannot admit. The artist is always conscious, from the beginning, of the impression her writing is going to make. Some poets convince themselves that they can abjure that consideration, in the name of accurate witness or purgative confession. But Glück is too dedicated to art, in a strict Modernist sense, to place any goal above the goal of writing well. One of the most appealing things about her work is its commitment to poetry as a calling, an ideal she has described as "severe, strenuous, passionate—the giddiness of great discipline and great ambition." Glück is too much of a poet not to recognize that candor, in poetry, means the impression, or perhaps the illusion, of candor—that candor is no more immune to artifice than any other kind of poetic rhetoric.

Even so, there are different kinds of illusion, different inflections that the poet can choose to give to the appearance of honesty. Usually, a poet strikes us as honest when he allows us to see his weakness and confusion, since these are the experiences we most assiduously wish to conceal in ordinary life. Thus Herbert's lyrics of spiritual submission, or Larkin's lyrics of worldly failure,

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seem remarkably honest, and we have the feeling that we know their authors intimately. But there is also another kind of poetic honesty, whose ideal is not self-exposure but truth-telling—the fierce honesty of the prophets. This kind of honesty grows not out of weakness but out of power, a self-assurance so great that it scorns our usual shifts and evasions.

IN MODERN POETRY, THE MOST SEductive example of this tone, and the one that has been most influential for Glück, is Eliot. His name is associated with many kinds of authority, critical and cultural; but Glück, in an essay on Eliot, recognizes that his first and most enduring kind of authority comes from his poetry, from the poetic voice that seems to create "a desperate intimacy; as powerful a bond as can be imagined." This is the desperation of Tiresias in "The Waste Land," who, because he has been both man and woman, knows more than any man or woman could possibly know: "And I Tiresias have foresuffered all/Enacted on this same divan or bed;/I who have sat by Thebes below the wall/And walked among the lowest of the dead."

Glück sounds most like Eliot when she essays this Tiresian voice. And like Eliot, she finds it easiest to assume when speaking as a figure out of Greek myth. Myth is a ready storehouse of the properties that a prophet needs, and that a modern, secular, democratic American finds difficult to claim: universal relevance, divine sanction, unchallengeable prestige. Over the course of her career, Glück has tried on many costumes from the wardrobe of myth: Joan of Arc, Abishag, Circe, Penelope, and now, in *Averno*, Persephone once again. But the voice that issues from behind all these masks is recognizably the same, the voice of a poet entranced by her own dark resonance:

> Now the Queen of Carthage
> will accept suffering as she accepted
> favor:
> to be noticed by the Fates
> is some distinction after all.

This is Dido, from *Vita Nova* (1999), but it might as well be Penelope, from *Meadowlands* (1996):

> call out to him over the open water,
> over the bright water
> with your dark song, with your
> grasping,
> unnatural song—passionate,
> like Maria Callas. Who
> wouldn't want you? Whose most
> demonic appetite
> could you possibly fail to answer?

Or, indeed, Glück herself, speaking *in propria persona* in *Ararat* (1990): "I was born to a vocation:/to bear witness/to the great mysteries."

Glück has never been abashed in her intercourse with the great mysteries. "The true," she writes in "Against Sincerity," "has about it an air of mystery or inexplicability. This mystery is an attribute of the elemental." In striving after this kind of mysterious, elemental truth, Glück employs a vocabulary of Romantic grandeur, making free with big, auratic, imprecise words: "the formless/grief of the body, whose language/is hunger"; "You have betrayed me, Eros./You have sent me/my true love"; "Tell me/how you live in hell,/what is required in hell,/for I would send/my beloved there."

The starkness of Glück's verse—short lines, with frequent stanza breaks, and generous white space—is the natural expression of her belief that, as she once wrote, "we don't follow poems as arguments, step by step. We grasp them entire, and what we first grasp is tone." But Glück's poetry also suggests that a poet who wagers everything on tone—whose poems cannot function unless they are read as urgent, reverent, hypnotic monologues—ends up losing most of the qualities that make poetic language memorable. It is as though her lines are flattened by the gravitational pull of a "mystery" so intense that it crushes adjective and metaphor.

THE ACTUAL SUBJECT OF Glück's poems, the lasting and distinctive impression they make on the reader, is not of a mind curious about mystery, but of a mind that enjoys regarding itself in proximity to mystery. Glück's sovereign egotism was already evident in her first book, *Firstborn* (1968), which gives the style and properties of early Lowell a characteristic twist, as in "Phenomenal Survivals of Death in Nantucket":

> Here in Nantucket does the tiny soul
> Confront water. Yet this element
> is not foreign soil;
> I see the water as extension of
> my mind,
> The troubled part, and waves the
> waves of mind....

Where Lowell respected the Atlantic Ocean as a malign cosmic force, "the mast-lashed master of Leviathans," Glück swiftly reduces it to an emblem of her own interior state; it is "my mind," not "this element," that fascinates Glück. And this sense that the most interesting theater is the theater of the mind, where the self is always heroine, has been the most consistent feature of Glück's poetry. The design of her books has evolved in keeping with this priority. Since *Ararat*, each of her collections has been structured around a life change—the death of a father (*Ararat*), divorce (*Meadowlands*), setting up house in a new city (*Vita Nova*), and now, in *Averno*, the passage to age and illness. Each volume is a monodrama, the lyrics working together, as in Tennyson's "Maud," to map the protagonist's state of mind.

As this list shows, the dramas of Glück's life and poetry do not fall into the realm of abnormal psychology. In another poet, their very ordinariness might evoke a language of understated compassion—the poet suffering what we all suffer, but more articulately. But Glück's drive toward authenticity means that what her experience lacks in rarity, she must supply in the form of rhetorical intensity. And this is where the Greek myths come in. Divorce itself is grievous enough to have inspired tremendously moving sequences by George Meredith and Robert Lowell, but Glück's sequence about her divorce casts the principals as Odysseus, Penelope, and Circe. Likewise, old age was a humanizing subject for Yeats, for whom it seemed to require the discarding of the "circus animals" of Celtic myth, but for Glück, in *Averno*, it can be experienced only in terms of Persephone's descent to the underworld: "What will you do,/when it is your turn in the field with the god?"

THE PROBLEM WITH THIS USE of Greek myth, as many contemporary poets have unwittingly shown, is that today those myths themselves have no cultic power; they exist for us only as literature. (This is true even of biblical figures, which had a genuine mythical force in our culture far more recently than the Greek gods.) But to compare oneself

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to a figure out of literature is to cede to already existing literature a kind of ontological superiority, to cast oneself as the instantiation of a law that others have already discovered. Instead of approaching literature from a position of strength, as its heir and necessary sequel, the myth-besotted poet approaches it as a supplicant—even when, as with Glück, the intoxication of myth seems to give the poet a factitious strength.

The exception, of course, is when the modern writer approaches ancient myth in the spirit of satire or deconstruction. This, too, is something that Eliot knew: what Tiresias sees, in "The Waste Land," is the tawdry seduction of the typist by the "young man carbuncular," and it is the shocking juxtaposition of these registers that creates the poetic effect. It makes sense, then, that the most moving and surprising passages in Glück's work are those in which the mythological framework is violated by a disabused, merely human voice.

In *Meadowlands*, this is the role reserved for Telemachus, who serves Glück as a cool observer of the operatic passions of his parents: "My own taste dictates/accuracy without/garrulousness," she writes in "Telemachus' Dilemma." Even better, in that book, are the moments when we suddenly hear what are plainly the voices of Glück and her husband, engaged in the sort of sordid domestic quarrel that makes Odysseus and Penelope fall off their stilts: "I said you could snuggle. That doesn't mean/your cold feet all over my dick"; or, still closer to home, "You should take one of those chemicals,/maybe you'd write more./Maybe you have some kind of void syndrome."

THIS IS THE REVENGE OF THE actual on the mythical, and Glück's willingness to admit it into her poetry suggests the strong influence that American confessional poetry has had on her. More generally, the habits of psychoanalysis have been deeply bred in Glück: its paradoxical encouragement of realism and narcissism at once has seldom been better demonstrated than in her poetry. Glück has written that psychoanalysis was her version of higher education: for seven years after graduating high school, she remembers in "Education of the Poet," "analysis was what I did with my time and with my mind." The brutally close interrogation of family life that Glück performs in *Meadowlands* and *Ararat*, her best books, is clearly animated by a Freudian belief that family, not character, is destiny. One of Glück's favorite subjects, which returns once again in *Averno*, is her rivalry with her younger sister, which she presents as a formative influence on her life:

> Suppose
> you saw your mother
> torn between two daughters:
> what could you do
> to save her but be
> willing to destroy
> yourself—she would know
> who was the rightful child,
> the one who couldn't bear
> to divide the mother.

This passage, from *Ararat*, is not particularly eloquent, but it is psychologically convincing, and therefore humanly moving. Indeed, it seems especially moving when encountered in the context of Glück's work, where the biographical is so often inflated out of recognition. Yet it is clear that this inflating impulse, the tendency to mythologize her own experience, is equally a product of Glück's psychoanalytic orientation. Who but Freud, after all, taught us to name our parents after Greek myths, and to regard self-dramatization as a form of self-cure?

Glück suggests this paradox in "The Untrustworthy Speaker" when she writes, "I know myself; I've learned to hear like a psychiatrist./When I speak passionately,/that's when I'm least to be trusted." The psychiatrist is the imaginary auditor who is supposed to be able to detect exaggeration, but whose very presence also encourages it. Which tendency prevails depends on the character of the poet and on her conception of what poetry is supposed to be. For Lowell, psychoanalysis was a means of disenchantment, as in the savagely disillusioned portraits of his parents in "Life Studies." For Glück, it more often seems a spur to narcissism.

THE ENEMY OF NARCISSISM IS irony, for irony involves seeing one's self as if it were not oneself. And irony is the quality signally missing from Glück's poetry. Surely a saving dose of ironic detachment would have allowed her to avoid bêtises such as the memorable anticlimax of the last poem in *Vita Nova*:

> Life is very weird, no matter how
> it ends,
> very filled with dreams. Never
> will I forget your face, your frantic
> human eyes
> swollen with tears.
> *I thought my life was over and*
> *my heart was broken.*
> *Then I moved to Cambridge.*

Ironic self-awareness would have been even more useful in *The Wild Iris*, a book admirable in its ambition and seriousness. Three voices speak in the closet drama of *The Wild Iris*: the poet, who implores God to reveal himself; God, who responds with scolding adjurations to modesty; and the flowers underfoot, which look on with detached scorn at human folly. But Glück's version of the Book of Job founders on the threadbareness of her metaphysics: her God says things like "How can you understand me/when you cannot understand yourselves?" More distasteful, however, is the titanic arrogance of the human speaker, which cannot be dismissed as simply a commentary on the egotism of our species, since it so closely resembles Glück's voice as we know it in her other work:

> If there is justice in some other
> world, those
> like myself, whom nature forces
> into lives of abstinence, should get
> the lion's share of all things, all
> objects of hunger, greed being
> praise of you. And no one praises
> more intensely than I, with more
> painfully checked desire, or more
> deserves
> to sit at your right hand, if it exists....

Only our own time, perhaps, could produce a religious poem so completely lacking in humility.

AS *AVERNO* SHOWS, DEATH IS no more able than God to shatter Glück's accustomed sense of dramatic centrality. The poet is now in her sixties, and has evidently undergone some physical ordeal:

> It does me no good; violence has
> changed me.
> My body has grown cold like the
> stripped fields;
> now there is only my mind,
> cautious and wary,

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with the sense it is being tested.

But as these lines show, the chastening of the body has not diminished Glück's pride in her mind, which has always been the real seat of her ambitions. Her encounter with death, like her encounters with love and sex and divorce and God, have only confirmed her consciousness of superior insight, deeper sensitivity, darker knowledge. "Someone like me doesn't escape," she writes in "Thrush," as though death were not the leveler but a doorman at an exclusive club. Thus *Averno*, despite the change of scene and subject, marks no real evolution in the actual substance of Glück's poetry, as is clear in these lines from "Prism":

> The self ended and the world began.
> They were of equal size,
> commensurate,
> one mirrored the other.

They may mirror each other, but for Louise Glück it has always been the self that comes first. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 4

THE EDITORS RESPOND:
George W. Bush's FCC, chaired by Michael Powell, first tried in 2002 to remove the protections that forbade telecommunications companies from charging different rates for different content on the Internet. A lower court reversed the ruling, but the FCC and its cable allies appealed to the Supreme Court, which, in 2005, ruled that the FCC could—but was not required to—remove the restrictions on discrimination over the Internet. The FCC then did so, and the new regulations, which will allow companies like Comcast and Verizon to discriminate among content providers—penalizing Internet phone services, for instance—will take effect this August. The broadband companies that fund the misleadingly named Hands Off the Internet claim that they will only charge special fees to a few big shots (eldercare monitoring!?) and use the profits to improve service for the rest of us. But legislation can't be made on the basis of what a few companies *say* they will do. Enron and its allies claimed a decade ago that electricity deregulation would bring dramatically lower prices rather than price-gouging and brownouts. To protect the free market in goods and ideas, Congress needs to pass net neutrality now.

RACE AGAINST HISTORY

STEVEN PINKER OFFERS MANY genetically-based speculations on why Ashkenazi Jews as a group have an average IQ higher than that of their gentile neighbors ("Groups and Genes," June 26). But he omits the explanation my parents gave me almost 70 years ago, when I was a very little boy in Nazi Germany. It was the intellectually gifted Jews, they explained, who were best able to survive the repeated persecutions, expulsions, and murders at the hands of the Christian rulers and populace. The smart ones had sense enough to leave early, to take some of their books and other assets, to find a new place that would have them (or to buy a prince's or bishop's protection), and to set up an intellectually nurturing home for a large and healthy family that would pass on their intelligence to the next generation. Those who were less intelligent, my parents explained, were more likely to be killed at a young age by Christian mobs, would be less able to restart their lives in new locations, and, if they found new locations, would have difficulty raising as many children.

The information was heartening to me in Germany, and I appreciated their superior intelligence when we landed in England off a ferry from Antwerp and learned of the Nazis' pogrom of November 9, 1938, which had torched the synagogues and terrorized the lives of Germany's Jews while we were sleeping safely in our cabin. My parents' explanation helped me also in the many schoolyards I got to know, as we were forced to move in wartime England, where kids would beat me up because I was a Jew, or because I was a German, or both. As I explained to my children many years later, it wasn't just a Jewish thing to be intelligent: The gentiles who persecuted us truly deserved the credit for forcing us to be smart.

MICHAEL BERNET
New Rochelle, New York

PINKER DOES NOT RECITE THE CONclusion about Jewish intelligence drawn by Irving Howe in *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made*. In focusing on the New York school system at the peak of immigration in 1905, Howe wrote: "The bulk of Jewish immigrant children, studies indicate, were not very different in their capacities or performances from the bulk of pupils from most other ethic groups." Despite what sentimentalists maintain, not "all or most Jewish children burned with zeal for the life of the mind." It's time to put the myth to rest once and for all.

WALT GARDNER
Los Angeles, California

I REALLY WISH PINKER HAD LEFT OUT of his otherwise interesting essay the question of whether the recognition of inherited intelligence is "good for the Jews." Though Pinker is an innovative evolutionary thinker, his grasp of *How the Mind Works* is far superior to his knowledge of how the Jews work. The answer to the traditional question, "Is it good for the Jews?" always depends on which Jews are being referred to. Assimilationist Jews like Pinker are primarily concerned, as he states, with how the perceived high intelligence of Ashkenazim will affect the overall tolerance of Jews by their non-Jewish neighbors. Other Jews, primarily concerned with Jewish continuity, will proudly value the perception of Ashkenazi intelligence. They will not be looking over their shoulders, worried about what the non-Jews will think. For these Jews, there are two nonassimilationist answers to the question: First, it is good for the Jews to put themselves in a position to be strongly influenced by their ancestors; i.e., to practice authentically the religion of the Jewish people. That influence from Judaic observance and learning is the principle reason why an identifiable Jewish people is still around today after 3,500 often difficult years. Second, it is good for the Jews to assume necessary power over their own lives and, when essential, over the lives of others.

RICK GOLDBERG
President
Binah Yitzrit Foundation
Austin, Texas

PINKER MAKES FACILE ARGUMENTS that simply serve to reinforce

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stereotypes about ethnic groups. For example, he suggests that the high number of Nobel laureates proves that the forward "tail" of the IQ distribution curve is markedly skewed among the Ashkenazim. Why is the number of Nobels a sign of high IQ? Doesn't socially driven motivation figure into his calculus? Do Latinos or athletes from the Caribbean islands have a particular genetic propensity for the skills of baseball?

ELLIOTT SHERR
Assistant Professor in Neurology and Pediatrics
University of California, San Francisco
San Francisco, California

THE QUESTION POSED BY THE EDITORS in the table of contents ("Is the gene for intelligence ... really more prevalent among Ashkenazi Jews?") is scientifically dubious and fosters a simplistic and generally inaccurate view of the relationship between genes and functions. Until proved otherwise, the editors should assume that there are many loci at which allelic differences affect intelligence. It is also likely that none of the corresponding genes directly (or solely) encode cognitive ability.

NEIL GREENSPAN
Professor of Pathology
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio

STEVEN PINKER RESPONDS:
The hypothesis that Ashkenazim were selected for intelligence to survive expulsions and pogroms can't be ruled out. But it faces many challenges, such as whether the persecutions occurred in enough generations to maintain a steady selective environment, whether smarter individuals consistently survived, and whether other persecuted groups were affected in similar ways. The widely repeated story that early-twentieth-century Jewish immigrants had low IQ scores turns out to be a myth, and Gregory Cochran (and fellow researchers) reviewed evidence that Jews outscored gentiles at all income levels. Nonetheless, it's plausible that most Jews were not especially intellectual—consistent with the reminiscence of psychologist Stanley Schachter.

Of course, high intelligence is not sufficient to win a Nobel Prize in physics, but it is surely necessary. The tenfold overrepresentation of Jews among laureates does not "prove" that they are more intelligent, but it converges with the results from IQ tests, which are often criticized for being irrelevant to performance in the real world. Whether Cochran et al.'s claims reinforce stereotypes is irrelevant: A stereotype is just a statistical generalization, and some stereotypes are true.

PROF DOFF

MARTIN PERETZ'S ATTACK ON PROfessor Nannerl Keohane is mean-spirited and uninformed ("High Ground," June 26). Keohane's reputation as a political theorist was established by her book *Philosophy and the State in France*, a 500-page study of the evolution of early modern political thought in France, a subject long neglected in the Anglo-American literature. Published just before she became president of Wellesley College (in 1981), it is still well-regarded and cited by writers on modern political theory. It is not, as Peretz supposes, her dissertation—a fact he might easily have ascertained. Nobody who knows Keohane or has heard her speak in academic fora could doubt for a moment her seriousness as a scholar. While serving as president of Wellesley and Duke, she continued to participate in scholarly activities. Her 2005 Godkin Lecture at Harvard on "The Power of Leadership" is a work of erudition as well as eloquence. In 2005, she joined the Princeton faculty, where she continues her teaching and research. The circumstances of former Harvard President Larry Summers's departure from the Harvard presidency are not illuminated by denigrating this first-rate intellectual and distinguished leader in American higher education.

CHARLES BEITZ
Princeton University
JOSHUA COHEN
Stanford University
RUTH GRANT
Duke University
STEPHEN MACEDO
Princeton University
NANCY ROSENBLUM
Harvard University
IAN SHAPIRO
Yale University
ROGERS SMITH
University of Pennsylvania
The writers are political theorists.

ALONG WITH KEOHANE, WE WERE fellows at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) in 2004–2005. We wish to go on record that not once in our many intellectual encounters with her during that year did we find even a trace of the mean-spirited rancor, biased judgment, and ad hominem remarks that characterize Peretz's attack. Keohane has an ample endowment of the intellectual and personal qualities that, judging by this column, Peretz lacks.

PETER KATZENSTEIN
Professor of International Studies
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York
JONATHAN BENDOR
Professor of Political Economics
Stanford University
Palo Alto, California
This letter was co-signed by 29 other fellows of the CASBS.

MARTIN PERETZ RESPONDS:
I'll respond only to the first letter, since the second says only that I lack Keohane's sterling qualities. The letter from seven political theorists comes lamely to the defense of a professional colleague, and one who is now known by—I would estimate—a huge majority at Harvard as the engineer of a travesty. Why do I say lamely? Two reasons: First, they much exaggerate the impact of her only real book, saying it is "still well-regarded and cited by writers on modern political theory." Well, not quite "still," and not quite "modern." Google Scholar shows that Keohane's academic publications average fewer than ten scholarly citations. (By contrast, Larry Summers's publications merit hundreds of citations each.) Second, the letter ignores the fact that Keohane was the most fixated member of the Harvard Corporation, who, after carefully choosing which faculty she would consult, delivered the death blow to Summers's presidency by declaring that he could no longer govern. That is what my article was about. Not one of the signers (of either letter) comments on the real point of my diarist, which was to explain what she actually did and why it matters. Ironically, I know that at least some of the signatories actually agree with me that what she has wrought is at once a disaster and an injustice. Was I intemperate? You'd better believe it. ■

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Il.Duce.blogspot.com

I VIOLATED GODWIN'S LAW a few weeks ago. No, not William Godwin, Shelley's mentor and the proto-socialist husband of Mary Wollstonecraft. That's too old. I mean Mike Godwin, the American computer law attorney. He drew up his law in 1990. It states that the longer an online discussion, the more likely it is that someone will compare someone else to a Nazi or to Hitler. At that point, tradition commands that the thread shall be shut down. I ran afoul of the law in a very big way. On my own NEW REPUBLIC blog, I called the entire political blogosphere fascistic and coined the term "blogofascism." Everybody went nuts. I was a "douchebag." I was "mentally unbalanced." My writing was "spittle." According to one cognitively inclined blogger, "Lee Siegel has comprehension problems." One reply was especially hurtful: "I don't know what Lee Siegel looks like, but in my mind I picture a confused, angry Burt Reynolds."

I DON'T BLAME PEOPLE FOR GETTING upset. The word "fascist" summons up historical nightmares, yet it also puts you in mind of the infantile left's hotheaded invective. Both associations were, in fact, my hotheaded point. Godwin's Law didn't come out of nowhere. The left-liberal blogs have become a playground of reckless, bullying invective. (I expect it on the right.) The Iraq war fomented a polarized politics more antagonistic than at any time since the Vietnam war, and that condition crystallized the left-liberal blogosphere's obstreperousness. Like its right-wing counterpart, polarization and rage are its meat and drink. George W. Bush's criminal incompetence is the engine that drives it.

BUT IT'S NOT EXACTLY EFFECTUAL TO be sustained by what you hate. Politics is about persuading your adversary's supporters to come to your side. It's not about reassuring everyone on your side—under the guise of "thinking strategically"—that you and they are absolutely right. The Republican right wing pushed its party to an extremist fundamentalism. That, in turn, created its mirror image in the fevers of the left-liberal blogosphere, which is now trying to push the Democrats to an extremist fundamentalism. Fascism, having begun as a syncretic socialism, wasn't always evil. It started out in radically polarized circumstances and consisted of extremist and fundamentalist rhetoric. It was a style before it became a movement. I wasn't stigmatizing a politics. I was characterizing a mode of expression.

A GOOD FIGHT IS CERTAINLY NOT something I mind—if you dish it out, et cetera. Yet, having been stung by my charges of dictatorial bullying, the left-liberal blogs proceeded to prove my point. They bunched together in a corner of the schoolyard and solicited one another's approval by heaving bigger and sloppier mudpies. It wasn't a good intellectual and rhetorical fight at all. But, beyond the blogofascist aside, I had made an argument that I waited futilely for someone to address. I had questioned the effectiveness of blogospheric rage and suggested that blogger fanaticism had a lot to do with the inability of bloggers to apply themselves to serious reflection. All the bite-sized thoughts, rapid disses, and inanely meandering threads make it hard to concentrate on anything for very long. Linking is no substitute for thinking. So people scream because they can't focus. You have the impression of bloggers who are so pacified by shouting their rage—and so appeased by smugly shared sentiments—that they turn off their computers at night and go to sleep feeling empowered and relaxed. No wonder, several years after the blogosphere allegedly became a people powerhouse, the country is mired even deeper in Iraq and successfully distracted by one false public alarm after another. Catharsis is for art, not politics.

ALL THIS IS FAIRLY TRAGIC, BECAUSE blogging is full of promise. Blogs—and I don't mean only political blogs—offer newer and wider opportunities to all sorts of people. We all know by now how they can shame the mainstream media for its uptight passivity, its infinite degrees of complicity with the status quo, its sight- and hearing-impaired *hubris*. But maybe blogs' brightest capacity is to create new inroads for gifted writers and thinkers excluded, by the whimsy of circumstance, from the established venues. Why did so many powerful mainstream editors finally bend both ears to the bloggers? Because, throughout their lives, their elite social reflexes had prompted them to avoid friction or antagonism at all costs. And here were these sudden antagonists, inhabiting an unfamiliar environment, loudly and publicly attacking them right where they lived. So the powerful, prestigious editors heeded their social reflexes, reached out to the bloggers, and opened a few doors for them.

YET THE SPECTER OF THE BLOGOsphere's gradual assimilation into the mainstream is just as disheartening as the blogosphere's complacent groupthink and insular chitchat. It points to a certain buried diffidence, which you can see in the mask of anonymity so many bloggers hide behind. Is it too much to ask people to put their name where their mouth is? Even for bloggers who use their own names, all the compulsive linking—to a degree, linking is the new logrolling—is a way never to say anything provocative without nervously assuring the reader that someone else said it first. Maybe the blogosphere is in such danger of slipping into the status quo because a lot of bloggers have the mainstream editors' very same social reflexes, but in reverse.

I WOULD LOVE TO SEE A MILLION BLOGS bloom with real idiosyncratic thinking, real provocation outside any group's agenda, real argument, real eloquence, and even real investigative reporting. "People power" doesn't have to be a synonym for "lack of daring and originality." The question the blogosphere has to ask itself is whether it truly has become a rejuvenating alternative to the status quo in journalism and politics or a dumping ground for the mainstream's worst aspects—political extremism, narcissistic fantasy, cowardly herding. Or, as Burt Reynolds put it in *Sharky's Machine*, "You know, Frisco, when we used to flush the toilet upstairs, we always wondered where it came to."

LEE SIEGEL

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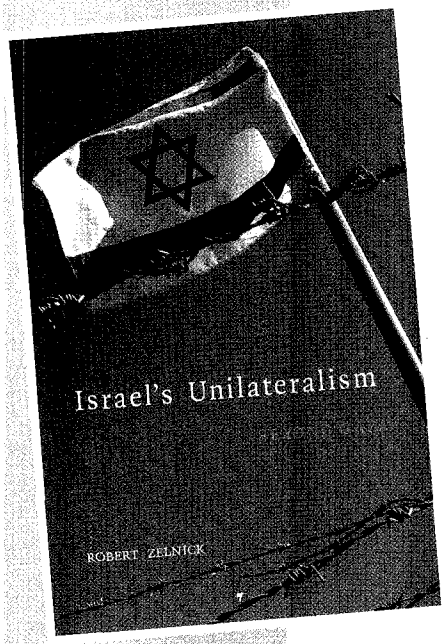

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